Śrīmate Rāmānujāya Namaḥ

Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā

with

Gītā Bhāṣya of Bhagavad Rāmānujācārya

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Foreword

Why another translation and commentary on the Bhagavad Gita when there are already so many available in the bookstores and libraries throughout the world? The answer is that of the three Vedānta Åcaryas only Śankara's commentary supporting his Advaita (Non-dual) philosophy has been well propounded and perpetuated through the centuries, whereas Rāmānuja's commentary from the point of view of Visishtadvaita (Qualified non-dualism) has been largely ignored or available only to the Tamil speaking public or to Sanskrit scholars. As far as I am aware there are only two English versions in print. One by M.R. Sampatkumaran, published by Ananthacharya Indological Research Institute in January 1985. The other is by Swami Adidevananda published by the Ramakrishna Math.

These two works are of impeccable scholarship being based on a phrase for phrase translation of the medieval Sanskrit. Unfortunately this approach results in an English text that is stilted, repetitious and incomprehensible to many people. My approach has been to be as true as possible to the original meaning but to be more creative in it's formulation into contemporary English. I have relied heavily on these two scholarly works in making this work available to the lovers of the Gita. How well I have succeeded is for the discerning reader to judge.

Abbreviations Used

Sve. Up. — Śvetaśvatāra Upaṇiṣad
Mun. Up. — Muṇḍaka Upaṇiṣad
Chan. Up. — Chāṇḍogya Upaṇiṣad
Ka. Up. — Kaṭha Upaṇiṣad
Brh. Up. — Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaṇiṣad
B.S. — Brahma Sutras
V.P. — Viṣṇu Purāṇa

A Note on the Translation

It must be born in mind that Rāmānuja did not actually “translate” the Gita but paraphrased it in simpler Sanskrit. Much of the actual Commentary (*Bhashya)* is repetitive paraphrasing which I have left out whenever it does not elucidate the meaning of the verse. I have also taken the liberty of giving exhaustive footnotes to clarify points which many less scholarly readers would find difficult to understand. Apart from the archaic language, the other problem with Rāmānuja’s Bhashya is that he frequently launches into technically detailed refutations of the Advaitic position of Shankara Acharya. These arguments are coached in the technical terms and classical style of Vedic logic and debate, and while interesting, they tend to be daunting, confusing and tedious to those unschooled in logic and the art of debate (*nyāya* and *tarka*). In order to render the text more "user-friendly" I have taken the liberty of extracting these debates and assembling them in an appendix at the end of the work so that those who are interested may study them and others may continue enjoying the text itself. Throughout the Gita Rāmānuja quotes extensively and exhaustively from the Upanishads, Vedas and Puranas to support his particular interpretation of knotty points. I have again taken the liberty of substituting many of the actual quotes with their references in order to make the commentary less bulky.

There is quite a difference between “translating” and “interpreting”. Each and every Sanskrit word can be substituted by up to 10 different words in English — the word that we choose involves a certain amount of “interpreting” — which means that the translator can always be accused of bias and “spin” in his work. I humbly request the scholars to forgive any errors that I have made, and liberties that I may have taken in interpreting Bhagavad Rāmānuja’s work, and accept this presentation as an introduction to the study of Rāmānuja’s Bhashya. I encourage all those readers who are captivated by this imperfect treatise to approach a learned scholar and to study the Gita under him in order to rectify all the mistakes that I have made.

An important point to bear in mind is that Vedanta is an experiential methodology of investigating the highest truth. Every teaching needs to be applied in our own lives and to be integrated in order to personally experience it's veracity. Nothing of what Krishna says needs to be accepted simply because He is the speaker, rather it is accepted because it is an personally experiential Truth.

Rāmānuja has also summed up that according to Mīmāmsa (Vedic hermeneutics) in order for any Scriptural Text to be considered as authoritative it must fulfil certain conditions;

- It must conform to reality as we experience it.
- It must be logical and not contradict any of the other two other means of knowledge such as perception and inference.
- The content of the text must be internally consistent.
- The knowledge presented in the text must have a practical application.

And it is this practical application which is the true test of the Truth of Scripture.

Chapter 1

Arjuna-viśāda Yogaḥ

Arjuna's Grief

Introduction

yat padāmbhoruha dhyāna vidhvasta śeṣa kalmaṣaḥ |
vastutām upayāto'ham yāmuneyam namāmi tam ||

I bow to the renowned Yamunacharya; by meditating upon whose lotus-like feet all my mental obstacles without exception were absolved, and I was thus led to enlightenment.

The Nature of The Supreme Being

Nārāyaṇa is the Consort of Sri, He is absolutely auspicious and is the antithesis of all that is evil. His essential nature consists of Being (*sat*), Consciousness (*cit*) and Bliss (*ānanda*) and these characteristics distinguish Him from all other beings. He is veritably a great ocean of innumerable auspicious attributes which are intrinsic to His nature and cannot be surpassed — some of them being; omniscience, omnipotence, sovereignty, energy, creative-potency and glory.

Nārāyaṇa has a divine form, which is both pleasing and appropriate. His form is inconceivable, indescribable[1], divine, eternal and immaculate. He is a repository of limitless perfections such as radiance, beauty, fragrance, tenderness, pervading sweetness and youthfulness. The Lord is adorned with suitable divine ornaments which are diverse, infinite, amazing, eternal, flawless, unlimited and holy.

Śrīman Nārāyaṇa possesses appropriate divine weapons. They are countless, of fantastic potency, eternal, impeccable and matchlessly auspicious. He is the Beloved of Śrī, whose eternal and immaculate nature, attributes, glory, sovereignty and virtues, unsurpassed and countless, are all agreeable and worthy of Him.

The feet of the Lord are constantly adored by countless numbers of perfected beings (*Suris*) whose nature, existence and activities are in accordance with His will and whose numerous qualities such as knowledge, action and glory are eternal, impeccable and unsurpassed. All of these beings work joyously in complete subservience to Śrīman Nārāyaṇa.

The nature and qualities of Śrīman Nārāyaṇa transcend all thought and words. He dwells in the divine and imperishable supreme Realm which abounds in manifold, wondrous and countless objects, means and places of enjoyment. It is an abode in consonance with His being and is infinite in its wondrous glory and magnitude. The projection, maintenance and dissolution of the entire cosmos filled with multifarious, variegated and innumerable objects is His transcendental pastime.

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[1] All the Scriptures state that the Supreme reality is "Inconceivable" therefore every description given subsequently needs to be understood as an approximation (*arthavāda*) in order to glorify that Supreme reality and not a definitive theological statement.

The Nature of the Incarnation

The Supreme Being, Śrīman Nārāyaṇa, projected the entire universe, beginning with Brahma (the creator) down to plants and minerals. Being inaccessible in His transcendental form for meditation and worship by sentient beings including Brahma, gods, humans etc., and being an ocean of compassion and loving condescension, maternal affection[2] and generosity — He took forms in the likeness of various kinds of beings. In this act of self-embodiment His own transcendental nature was not in any way compromised. Thus the Supreme Lord took birth in the world in order to receive the worship of devotees and in order to grant them their desired goals comprising of *Dharma* (righteousness, duty), *Artha* (material prosperity), *Kama* (Sense gratification) and *Moksha* (Liberation), each in accordance with his/her individual desires.

Under the pretext of relieving the earth of its burdens, but really in order to make Himself available for us (frail humans) to take refuge in Him, the Lord incarnated on the earth as Sri Krishna. He thus manifested Himself to all beings. He engaged in divine pastimes which captivated the minds and hearts of all, high and low. He vanquished demoniac beings such as Pūtana, Śakaṭa, the two Arjuna trees, Ariṣṭa, Prālambha, Dhenuka, Kaliya, Keśin, Kuvalaya-pīḍa, Cānura, Muṣṭika, Tośala and Kaṁsa. He spread joy and beatitude over the entire world with the nectar of His glances and speech, demonstrating His boundless compassion, friendliness and love for all.

He made Akrūra, Mālākāra and others the most ardent of devotees by the manifestation of His unsurpassed qualities of beauty and loving compassion.

With the ostensible intention of encouraging the sons of Pāṇḍu in their duty of engaging in war, He revealed the teaching of *Bhakti* (devotion) directed at Himself. This Yoga of Devotion was promulgated together with the subsidiary disciplines of *jñāna* (Meditation) and *Karma* (Selfless works). The Yoga of Devotion has been taught as the path to the ultimate goal of Liberation.

When the internecine war between the sons of Pāṇḍu and the descendants of Kuru broke out, Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Being, the God of all gods, overwhelmed by His love for those devotees who had taken refuge in Him, took upon Himself the humble role of the charioteer of Arjuna, so that He could be seen by all the people. Even though the King Dhṛtarāṣṭra, who was blind both physically and spiritually, knew that Kṛṣṇa was the Supreme Being, he expressed a desire to hear about the military competence of his son Suyodhana (Duryodhana) and questioned Sañjaya his chief minister thus: —

Dhṛtarāṣṭra uvāca

dharma-kṣetre kuru-kṣetre samavetā yuyutsavaḥ |
māmakāḥ pāṇḍavāścaiva kim akurvata sañjaya || *1* ||

Dhrtarashtra said:
1. What did my people and the Pandavas do, O Sanjaya[3], gathered together on the holy field of Kurukshetra, eager for battle?

Sañjaya uvāca

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[2] The term used is *vāsalya* which means the love of a cow for its calf. The image invoked is that of a cow spontaneously shedding milk on hearing the mooing of its calf.

[3] **Sañjaya** was the son of a charioteer named Gavalgama, he was an extremely learned scholar in the Scriptures, generous and a staunch practitioner of Dharma being impartial and truthful. For these reasons Bhishma appointed him to be the second minister of the King Dhrtarashtra along with Vidura as the first.

dṛṣṭvā tu pāṇḍavānīkaṁ vyūḍhaṁ duryodhanas tadā |
ācāryam upasaṅgamya rājā vacanam abravīt || 2 ||

Sanjaya said:
2. O King! Duryodhana[4], being moved by the sight of the Pandava army in battle array, approached his teacher Drona[5] and said these words:

paśyaitām pāṇḍu-putrāṇām ācārya mahatīṁ camūm |
vyūḍhāṁ drupada-putreṇa tava śiṣyeṇa dhīmatā || 3 ||

Duryodhana said
3. Behold, O master, this mighty army of the Pandavas, commanded by their Field-Marshal the son of Drupada[6], who is your intelligent disciple.

atra śūrā maheṣvāsā bhīmārjuna samā yudhi |
yuyodhāno virāṭaśca drupadaśca mahārathaḥ || 4 ||

4. There (in that army) are heroes, great archers like Bhima and Arjuna; Yuyudhana[7], Virata[8] and Drupada a mighty warrior[9].

dhṛṣṭaketuś-cekitānaḥ kāśi-rājaśca vīryavān |
purujit-kunti-bhojaśca śaibyaśca nara-puṅgavaḥ || 5 ||

5. Dhrshtaketu, Cekitana[10], and the valiant king of Kashi[11], Purujit and Kuntibhoja[12], and Saibya[13] the best among men;

yudhāmanyuśca vikrānta uttamaujāśca vīryavān |
saubhadro draupadeyāśca sarva eva mahārathāḥ || 6 ||

6. Yudhamanyu the valiant, and Uttamaujas the strong[14]; and also the son of Subhadra[15], and the sons of Draupadi[16], all mighty chariot-warriors.

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[4] **Duryodhana** was the eldest among the one hundred sons of Dhrtarashtra, he was cruel and wicked and did everything in his power to exterminate the Pandavas. During the battle he was finally killed by Bhima.

[5] **Drona** was the son of a great Rishi Bharadvaja and learned the science of marshal arts from Parasurama. He had the benediction that he would only die at the time of his choosing and thus was invincible. After a falling out with his childhood friend Drupada, he took employment in the kaurava court and became the teacher to both the Pandavas and the Kauravas.

[6] **Drupada** was the king of Panchala who hated Drona and prayed for a son who would kill him. A son was born from a yajna (sacrifice) that he had performed and he was named Drishtadyumna. He became the disciple of Drona and even though Drona new full well that the boy would eventually kill him, he still taught him all that he new about martial arts. So Duryodhana's tone here is one of sarcasm.

[7] **Yuyodhana** is another name for Satyaki a close and dear servant of Lord Krishna.

[8] **Virata** was the king of Matsya, under whose protection the Pandavas spent their last year of exile living incognito. His daughter Uttara later married Abhimanyu the son of Arjuna. Virata was killed in the battle along with his sons, Uttara, Shveta and Shankha.

[9] *Mahā-ratha* — "great chariot warrior" — a highly skilled martial artist who is capable of fighting 1000 archers at the same time.

[10] **Cekitana** was one of Sri Krishna's Yadava/Vrshni clansmen, a very chivalrous warrior who was killed by Duryodhana during the battle.

[11] The King of Kashi was born as a partial manifestation of the asura — Dirgh-jihva.

[12] **Purujit** and **Kuntibhoja** were brothers of Arjuna's mother Kunti. Both met their end at the hands of Drona.

[13] **Saibya** was the father of Devika, one of Yudhishthira's wives and is called 'the best among men' because of his exceptional military prowess.

asmākaṁ tu viśiṣṭā ye tān-nibodha dvijottama |
nāyakāḥ mama sainyasya saṁjñārthaṁ tān bravīmi te || 7 ||

7. O best of Brahmins, I shall familiarise you with our principle warriors - those who are the commanders of my army. I shall name them to refresh your memory.

bhavān bhīṣmaśca karṇaśca kṛpaśca samitiñjayaḥ |
aśvatthāmā vikarṇaśca saumadattas tathaiva ca || 8 ||

8. Yourself, Bhishma and Karna[17], the victorious Krpa[18], Ashvatthama[19], Vikarna[20] and Jayadratha the son of Somadatta[21].

anye ca bahavaḥ śūrā madārthe tyakta-jīvitāḥ |
nānā-śāstra praharaṇāḥ sarve yuddha-viśāradāḥ || 9 ||

9. And there are many other heroes who are determined to give up their lives for my sake. They are all experts in weaponry and experienced in the art of warfare.

aparyāptaṁ tad asmakaṁ balaṁ bhīṣmābhirakṣitam |
paryāptaṁ tvidam eteṣāṁ balaṁ bhīmābhirakṣitam || 10 ||

10. Inadequate is this force of ours, which is marshelled by Bhishma, while adequate is that force of theirs, which is marshelled by Bhima.

ayaneṣu ca sarveṣu yathā-bhāgam avasthitāḥ |
bhīṣmam evābhi-rakṣantu bhavantaḥ sarva eva hi || 11 ||

11. Therefore, do all of you guard Bhishma alone, stationed in your respective positions in the divisions of the army.

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[14] **Yudhamanyu** and **Uttamaujas** were brothers and princes of the Panchala kingdom, they died at the hands of Ashvatthama.

[15] **Subhadra** was Krishna's sister married to Arjuna, her son Abhimanyu was called Saubhadra. He studied martial arts under Arjuna and his uncle Balarama - Krishna's brother. At the time of the war he was only 16 years old. In the absence of his father he was the only one who could penetrate the *Chakra-vyuha* military formation of Drona, but he had not learnt how to escape. Trapped, he was then mercilessly killed by seven great *maharathis*, including Drona, Kripa and Karna.

[16] **Draupadi** gave birth to five sons, one by each of the Pandavas, their names were; Pratibindhya, Sutasoma, Srutakarma, Satanika, Srutasena. They were murdered in their sleep by Ashvatthama in order to please his friend Duryodhana.

[17] **Karna** was the first son of Kunti born out of wedlock to the Sun god. His was abandoned by Kunti and raised by a charioteer and his wife. Later on he was befriended by Duryodhana after being insulted by the Pandavas during a competition. Only on the eve of the battle did Kunti reveal his true identity to him, but duty-bound he fully supported his benefactor Duryodhana, promising Kunti that he would kill only Arjuna and none of his other half-brothers.

[18] **Kripa** and his sister **Kripi** were born from the prematurely ejaculated semen of the Rishi Saradvan when he saw the apsara Janapadi. After the battle he was appointed by Yudhishthira to tutor the young prince Parikshit.

[19] **Ashvatthama** was the son of Kripi who married Drona. He learnt the art of warfare from his father and was the last appointed commander –in-chief of the Kaurava army. He killed the five sons of Draupadi mistaking them for the five Pandavas and was severely traduced and humiliated by the Pandavas. In revenge he tried to kill the unborn son of Abhimanyu — Parikshit who was the sole heir to the Pandava dynasty. Parikshit was saved by Lord Krishna.

[20] A brother of Duryodhana who was killed by Bhima.

[21] **Somadatta** was a scion of the Kuru dynasty. He and his equally renowned son **Jayadratha** also know as **Bhurisrava** an highly accomplished warrior, were both killed in battle by Satyaki.

tasya sañjanayan harṣaṁ kuru-vṛddhaḥ pitāmahaḥ |
siṁhanādaṁ vinadyoccaiḥ śaṅkhaṁ dadhmau pratāpavān || *12* ||

(Sanjaya continued)
12. Then the valiant grandsire Bhishma, senior most of the Kuru clan, roaring like a lion, blew his conch with a view to encourage Duryodhana.

tataḥ śaṅkhāśca bheryaśca paṇavānaka-gomukhāḥ |
sahasaivābhyahanyanta sa śabdas-tumulo'bhavat || *13* ||

13. Then suddenly conches and kettle drums, trumpets, tabors and horns blared forth; and the sound was terrific.

tataḥ śvetair-hayair-yukte mahati syandane sthitau |
mādhavaḥ pāṇḍavaścaiva divyau śaṅkhau pradadhmatuḥ || *14* ||

14. Then Sri Krishna and Arjuna, stationed in their great chariot yoked with white horses, blew their divine conches.

pāñcajanyaṁ hṛṣīkeśo devadattaṁ dhanañjayaḥ |
pauṇḍraṁ dadhmau mahā-śaṅkhaṁ bhīma-karmā vṛkodaraḥ || *15* ||

15. Sri Krishna blew his conch, Pañcajanya, Arjuna his, named Devadatta and Bhima of terrible deeds the great conch Paundra.

ananta-vijayaṁ rājā kuntī-putro yudhiṣṭhiraḥ |
nakulaḥ sahadevaśca sughoṣa maṇi-puṣpakau || *16* ||

16. King Yudhishtira the son of Kunti blew his conch Ananta-vijaya and Nakula and Sahadeva blew their conches Sughosha and Mani-pushpaka.

kāśyaśca parameṣ-vasaḥ śikhaṇḍī ca mahārathaḥ |
dhṛṣṭadyumno virāṭaśca sātyakiś-cāparājitaḥ || *17* ||

17. And the King of Kashi the supreme archer, Shikhandi the mighty warrior, Dhrshtadyumna and Virata; and Satyaki the invincible;

drupado draupadeyāśca sarvaśaḥ pṛthivī-pate |
saubhadraśca mahā-bāhuḥ śaṅkhān dadhmuḥ pṛthak pṛthak || *18* ||

18. Drupada and the sons of Draupadi, and the strong-armed son of Subhadra[22] — all, O King, blew their various conches again and again

sa ghoṣo dhārtarāṣṭrāṇāṁ hṛdayāni vyadārayat |
nabhaśca pṛthivīṁ caiva tumulo'bhyanunādayan || *19* ||

19. And that tumultuous uproar, resounding through heaven and earth, rent the hearts of Dhrtarashtra's sons.

Commentary

Duryodhana, after personally reviewing the forces of Pandavas marshalled by Bhima, and his own army marshalled by Bhishma, turned to Drona his teacher, and expressed his

[22] Subhadra was the sister of Krishna and wife of Arjuna

concern that his own army would be inadequate to conquer the Pandava forces — he was grief-stricken.

Observing Duryodhana's loss of confidence, Bhishma, in order to encourage him, roared like a lion, and then blowing his conch, made his army sound their conches and kettle-drums, which made an uproar as a sign of their confidence of victory.

atha vyavasthitān dṛṣṭvā dhārtarāṣṭrān kapi-dhvajaḥ I
pravṛtte śastra-sampāte dhanur udyamya pāṇḍavaḥ II *20* II
hṛṣīkeśaṁ tadā vākyam idam āha mahī-pate I

20. Then Arjuna, who had Hanuman[23] as his banner crest, on beholding the sons of Dhrtarashtra in array, took up his bow, as the (preliminary) clashing of weapons began;

21. And he spoke, O King, these words to Sri Krishna …....

arjuna uvāca

senayor-ubhayor madhye rathaṁ sthāpaya me'cyuta II *21* II
yāvad etān nirīkṣe'haṁ yoddhu-kāmān avasthitān I
kair-mayā saha yoddhavyam asmin raṇa-samudyame II *22* II

Arjuna said:
…….. Station my chariot, O Krishna, between the two armies,
22. So that I may have a good look at those who are standing eager to fight and know with whom I have to fight in this enterprise of war;

yotsyamānān avekṣehaṁ ya ete'tra samāgatāḥ I
dhārtarāṣṭrasya durbuddher yuddhe priya cikīrṣavaḥ II *23* II

23. I wish to see those gathered here ready to fight in this battle in order to please the evil-minded [Duryodhana] son of Dhrtarashtra.

sañjaya uvāca

evam ukto hṛṣīkeśo guḍākeśena bhārata I
senayor-ubhayor madhye sthāpayitvā rathottamam II *24* II

Sanjaya said:
24. O Dhrtarashtra, thus addressed by Arjuna, Sri Krishna stationed that best of chariots between the two armies,

bhiṣma droṇa pramukhataḥ sarveṣāṁ ca mahīkṣitām I
uvāca pārtha paśyaitān samavetān kurūn iti II *25* II

25. While Bhishma and Drona and all the other kings looked on, and said, 'O Arjuna, behold these assembled Kauravas.'

tatrāpaśyat sthitān pārthaḥ pitṛn atha pita-mahān I
ācāryān mātulān bhrātṛn putrān pautrān sakhīṁs tathā II *26* II

26. Then Arjuna saw standing there, fathers and grand-fathers, teachers, uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons and comrades;

śvaśurān suhṛdaścaiva senayor-ubhayor api I
tān samīkṣya sa kaunteyaḥ sarvān bandhūn avasthitān II *27* II
kṛpayā parayā'viṣṭho viṣīdann idam abravīt I

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[23] In Mahābhārata 3;153 the story is told where Hanuman agrees to take the place of a flag upon Arjuna's chariot.

27. fathers-in-law and dear friends in both armies. When Arjuna saw all these kinsmen in array,
28. he was filled with deep compassion and said these words in despair...

arjuna uvāca

dṛṣṭvemaṁ svajanaṁ kṛṣṇa yuyutsaṁ samupasthitam || 28 ||
sīdanti mama gātrāṇi mukhaṁ ca pariśuṣyati |
vepathuśca śarīre me roma harṣaśca jāyate || 29 ||

Arjuna said:
O Krishna, seeing my kinsmen present here, eager for battle,
29. my limbs go weak, my mouth dries up, my body trembles and my hair stands on end.

gāṇḍīvaṁ sramsate hastāt tvak caiva pari-dahyate |
na ca śaknomy-avasthātuṁ bhramatīva ca me manaḥ || 30 ||

30. The bow Gandiva slips from my hand and my skin is burning, I can stand no longer, my mind seems to reel.

nimittāni ca paśyāmi viparītāni keśava |
na ca śreyo'nupaśyāmi hatvā svajanam āhave || 31 ||

31. I see inauspicious omens, O Krishna, I foresee no good in killing my own kinsmen in battle.

na kāṅkṣe vijayaṁ kṛṣṇa na ca rājyaṁ sukhāni ca |
kiṁ no rājyena govinda kiṁ bhogair jīvitena vā || 32 ||

32. I desire not victory, nor empire, nor pleasures. Of what use to us is an empire, O Krishna, or enjoyment or even life itself?

yeṣām arthe kāṅkṣitaṁ no rājyaṁ bhogāḥ sukhāni ca |
ta ime' vasthitā yuddhe prāṇāṁs tyaktvā dhanāni ca || 33 ||

33. Those for whose sake we desire the empire, enjoyment and pleasures, stand here ready for war, preparing to renounce life and wealth —

ācāryāḥ pitaraḥ putrāṁs tathaiva ca pitāmahāḥ |
mātulāḥ śvaśurāḥ pautrāḥ śyālāḥ sambandhinas tathā || 34 ||

34. Teachers, fathers, sons and also grandfathers, uncles, fathers-in-law and grandsons, brothers-in-law and other kinsmen —

etān na hantum icchāmi ghnato'pi madhusūdana |
api trailokya rājyasya hetoḥ kiṁ nu mahīkṛte || 35 ||

35. These I would not slay, though they might slay me, even for the sovereignty of the three worlds -how much less for this earth O Krishna?

nihatya dhārtarāṣṭrān naḥ kiṁ prītiḥ syāj-janārdana |
pāpam evāśrayed asmān hatvaitān ātatāyinaḥ || 36 ||

36. If we kill the sons of Dhrtarashtra, what joy will be ours, O Krishna? Blame alone will accrue to us if we kill these murderous felons[24].

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[24] *Åtatāyinah* —according to the Commentator Sridhara this term refers to people guilty of six kinds of crimes - arson, poisoning, murder, robbery with violence, appropriating land and kidnapping married women. To kill such people is not a sin according to the Smr̥tis (Codes of Law).

tasmān nārhā vayaṁ hantuṁ dhārtarāṣṭrān svabandhavān |
svajanaṁ hi kathaṁ hatvā sukhinaḥ syāma mādhava || *37* ||

37. Therefore, it is not befitting that we slay our kinsmen the sons of Dhrtarashtra. For if we kill our kinsmen, O Krishna , how indeed can we rejoice?

yady-apyete na paśyanti lobhopahata cetasaḥ |
kula-kṣaya-kṛtaṁ doṣaṁ mitra-drohe ca pātakam || *38* ||

38. Though these people, whose minds are overpowered by greed, see no evil in the destruction of a clan and no blame in treachery to friends,

kathaṁ na jñeyam asmābhiḥ pāpād asmān nivartitum |
kula-kṣaya-kṛtaṁ doṣaṁ prapaśyadbhir janārdana || *39* ||

39. should we who see well the evil of destroying a family not know how to recoil from this crime, O Krishna?

kula-kṣaye praṇaśyanti kula-dharmāḥ sanātanāḥ |
dharme naṣṭe kulaṁ kṛtsnam adharmo'bhibhavaty-uta || *40* ||

40. If the family is destroyed, its ancient traditions perish, and when traditions perish, unrighteousness overtakes the whole clan.

adharmābhi-bhavāt kṛṣṇa praduṣyanti kula-striyaḥ |
strīṣu duṣṭāsu vārṣṇeya jāyate varṇa-saṅkaraḥ || *41* ||

41. When unrighteousness prevails, O Krishna the women of the clan become corrupt; when women become corrupt, there arises intermixture of classes.

saṅkaro narakāyaiva kula-ghnānāṁ kulasya ca |
patanti pitaro hyeṣāṁ lupta-piṇḍodaka-kriyāḥ || *42* ||

42. This mixing of classes leads the clan to hell along with its destroyers; for the spirits of their ancestors fall, degraded, deprived of the ritual offerings of rice-balls and water[25].

doṣair etaiḥ kula-ghnānāṁ varṇa-saṅkara-kārakaiḥ |
utsādyante jāti-dharmāḥ kula-dharmāśca śāśvatāḥ || *43* ||

43. By the crimes of the clan-destroyers who bring about intermingling of classes, the ancient traditions of the clan and class are destroyed.

utsanna-kula-dharmāṇāṁ manuṣyāṇāṁ janārdana |
narake'niyataṁ vāso bhavatīty-anuśuśruma || *44* ||

44. For those whose family virtues are destroyed, dwelling in hell is ordained, O Krishna, thus have we heard.

aho bata mahat pāpaṁ kartuṁ vyavasitā vayam |
yad rājya sukha lobhena hantuṁ sva-janam udyatāḥ || *45* ||

45. Alas! we have resolved to commit a great crime in that we are ready to slay our kith and kin out of desire for sovereignty and enjoyments.

yadi mām apratīkāram aśastraṁ śastra-pāṇayaḥ |
dhārtarāṣṭrā raṇe hanyus tan-me kṣemataraṁ bhavet || *46* ||

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[25] Rice balls (*piṇḍas*) and libations of water with sesame seeds (*tarpana*) are the offerings that are made to the dead. Ed.

46. If the well-armed sons of Dhrtarashtra should slay me in battle, unresisting and unarmed, that would be better for me.

evam uktvā'rjunaḥ saṅkhye rathopastha upāviśat |
visṛjya saśaraṁ cāpaṁ śoka saṁvigna mānasaḥ || 47 ||

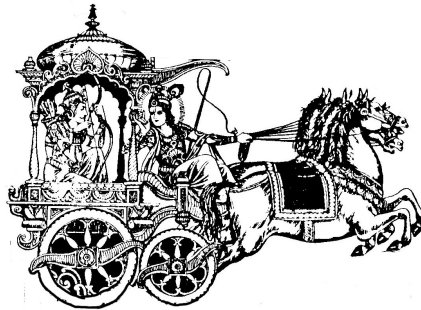
Sanjaya said:
47. Having spoken thus on the battle-field, Arjuna threw aside his bow and arrows and sat down on the seat of the chariot, his heart overwhelmed with grief.

Commentary

Sanjaya said to Dhrtarashtra:— "The high-minded Arjuna is extremely kind, deeply compassionate, dedicated to his family and supremely righteous. In spite of the repeated attempts of your people to destroy him and his brothers through cruel and murderous plots like burning in the lac-house etc., (MB. 1.154 - 163) which justified revenge on his part, with the help of the Supreme Being, nevertheless he declined to fight."

He felt weak, overcome by his love and extreme compassion for his relatives. He was also filled with fear, not knowing what was *Dharma* (righteous) and what was *Adharma* (unrighteous). His mind was distracted by grief at the thought of losing his relatives. So he cast aside his bow and arrow and sat down on the floor of the chariot as if to fast to the death.

hariḥ oṁ tatsat
iti śrīmad-bhagavad-gītāsupaniṣatsu
brahma-vidyāyāṁ yoga śāstre
śrī-kṛṣṇārjuna saṁvāde arjuna viśāda yogo nama
prathamo'dhyāyaḥ

Thus in the Upanishad of the Glorious Bhagavad Gita
The science of the Eternal, the Scripture of Yoga
The dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna
ends the first discourse entitled -
"Arjuna's Grief."

Chapter 2

Saṅkhya Yogaḥ

Communion through Knowledge

sañjaya uvāca

taṁ tathā kṛpayāviṣṭaṁ aśā-pūrṇā-kulekṣaṇam |
viṣīdantam idaṁ vākyam uvāca madhusūdanaḥ || 1 ||

Sanjaya said:
1. To him, who was thus overcome with pity, whose eyes were filled with tears, who was despondent and bewildered, Sri Krishna spoke these words:

śrī bhagavān uvāca
kutas tvā kaśmalam idaṁ viṣame samupasthitam |
anāryājuṣṭam asvargyam akīrtikaram arjuna || 2 ||

The Blessed Lord said:
2. Whence comes this unworthy weakness in a crisis, O Arjuna? It is unseemly for a noble person, it is disgraceful and obstructive to the attainment of heaven.

klaibyaṁ mā sma gamaḥ pārtha naitat-tvayyupapadyate |
kṣudraṁ hṛdaya daurbalyaṁ tyaktvottiṣṭha paraṅtapa || 3 ||

3. Yield not to unmanliness[26], O Arjuna, it does not become you. Cast off this base faint-heartedness and arise, O scorcher of foes!

arjuna uvāca
kathaṁ bhīṣmam ahaṁ saṅkhye droṇaṁ ca madhusūdana |
iṣubhiḥ pratiyotsyāmi pūjārhāv-arisūdana || 4 ||

Arjuna said:
4. O Krishna, O Destroyer of enemies, how can I fight with arrows in battle against Bhishma and Drona who are worthy of reverence?

gurūn ahatvā hi mahānubhāvān śreyo bhoktuṁ bhaikṣyam apīha loke |
hatvārtha kāmāṁs tu gurūn ihaiva bhuñjīya bhogān rudhira-pradigdhān || 5 ||

5. It is better even to live on a beggar's fare in this world than to slay these most venerable teachers. If I should slay my teachers, even though they may be degraded by desire for wealth, I would be enjoying only blood-stained pleasures.

na caitad vidmaḥ kataran no garīyo yadvā jayema yadi vā no jayeyuḥ |
yān eva hatvā na jijīviṣāmas te'vasthitāḥ pramukhe dhārtarāṣṭhrāḥ || 6 ||

6. We do not know, which of the two is better for us— our vanquishing them, the very sons of Dhrtarashtra, or their vanquishing us. After slaying them we would not wish to live, even though they are standing in array against us.

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[26] This is a snide reference to the last year of Arjuna's time in exile - spent living as a *kliba* — a transsexual teaching singing and dancing in the court of king Virata.

kārpaṇya doṣopahata svabhāvaḥ pṛcchāmi tvāṁ dharma samūḍha cetasaḥ |
yacchreyaḥ syān niścitaṁ brūhi tan me śiṣyas te śādhi māṁ tvāṁ prapannam || *7* ||

7. With my heart stricken by the weakness of pity, with my mind perplexed about my duty, I request you to teach me conclusively what is good for me. I am your disciple. Instruct me who have taken refuge in you.

na hi prapaśyāmi mamāpanudyād yacchokam ucchoṣaṇam indriyāṇām |
avāpya bhūmāv-asapatnam-ṛddham rājyaṁ suraṇām api cādhipatyam || *8* ||

8. Even if I should win unchallenged sovereignty of a prosperous earth or even the kingdom or lordship over the Devas, I do not feel that it would dispel the grief that burns up my senses.

sañjaya uvāca
evam uktvā hṛṣīkeśaṁ guḍakeśaḥ paraṅtapa |
na yotsya iti govindam uktvā tūṣṇīṁ babhūva ha || *9* ||

Sanjaya said;
9. Having spoken thus to Sri Krishna, Arjuna, the conqueror of sleep and the scorcher of foes, said, 'I will not fight' and became silent.

Commentary

Thus, the Lord, the Supreme Being, introduces the teaching regarding the Self for the sake of Arjuna whose natural courage was lost due to love and misplaced compassion. Arjuna considered the war to be unrighteous even though it is the greatest duty for warriors (Kṣatriyas). He then took refuge in Sri Krishna[27] to learn what the correct course of action was. Sri Krishna understood that Arjuna's delusion would only be overcome by the knowledge of the real nature of the Self, and the knowledge that war (action) is an ordained duty [for Kshatriyas] which, when performed without attachment to the fruits thereof is a means for Self-realisation.

tam uvāca hṛṣikeśaḥ prasanniva bhārata |
senayor ubhayor madhye viṣīdantaṁ idaṁ vacaḥ || *10* ||

10. O King, to him who was thus grieving between the two armies, Sri Krishna spoke the following words, as if smiling.

Commentary

'as if smiling,' [by way of ridicule] — Arjuna was speaking about duty (dharma) which was based on the awareness of the concept of the Self being distinct from the body, but he was torn between contradictory ideas and had suddenly renounced action while standing between the two armies preparing for battle. Sri Krishna spoke to Arjuna 'as if in jest', the discourse beginning with; — *"There never was a time when I did not exist" (2:12), and ending with "I will release you from all hindrances to self-realisation; grieve not!"* (18:66)— which deals with the real nature of the individual Self [*jivātman*], of the Supreme Self [*Paramātman*], and of the paths of works (Karma), knowledge (*Jñāna*) and devotion (Bhakti) which constitute the means for attaining the highest spiritual goal.

śrī bhagavān uvāca

[27] The Srivaishnava Acharyas point out that Arjuna has three episodes of grief and surrenders each time, this is the first.

aśocyān anvaśocas tvaṁ prajñāvādāṁśca bhāṣase |
gatāsūn agatāsūṁśca nānuśocanti paṇḍitāḥ || *11* ||

The Blessed Lord said
11. You grieve for those who should not be grieved for; yet you speak words of apparent wisdom. The wise grieve neither for the dead nor for the living.

Commentary

"Your grief is misplaced, and your contrived justification is based on teachings about the nature of the body and the Self such as: — *"The ancestors become degraded, deprived of the ritual offerings of food and water*"(1:42). — But for those who have truly realised the nature of the body and the Self, there is no reason for such grief.

Those who know the real truth will not grieve for physical bodies from which the life force has departed, nor for the Selves from which the principle of life cannot depart.

Hence, you are caught in this dilemma — profound sorrow at the thought of killing the Kauravas and at the same time you're in a quandary about righteousness and unrighteousness, which arises from awareness that the Self is [somewhat] different from the body. Therefore you do not [really] know the true nature of the body nor of the Self. Nor do you know about duties (dharma) like warfare etc., nor of the fact that this war [which is an incumbent duty in the present context], if fought without any selfish motive for results, is a means for Self-realisation."

na tvevāhaṁ jātu nāsaṁ na tvaṁ neme janādhipāḥ |
na caiva na bhaviṣyāmaḥ sarve vayamataḥ param || *12* ||

12. There never was a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor any of these temporal kings. Nor will there be any time in future when all of us shall cease to be.

Commentary

"I, [Krishna] who am, as you know, the eternal Lord of all, was never non-existent, but have always existed. There never was a time when these Selves (jīvas) like you [and the others], who are subject to My sovereignty, did not exist. You have always existed, and 'all of us' — I and you, shall never cease to be 'in the future'; we shall always exist. Just as there is certainly no doubt that I, the Supreme Self and Lord of all, am eternal, likewise, you [and all others] who are embodied Jīvas, should never doubt your eternality either."
The foregoing teaching implies that the difference between the Lord who is the sovereign over all, and the individual jīvas; as also the differences among the individual jīvas themselves, are real. This has been declared by the Lord Himself because different terms like 'I', 'you', 'these', 'all' and 'we' have been used by the Lord while explaining the truth of eternality in order to remove the misunderstanding of Arjuna who is deluded by ignorance.

[For the detailed argument please see appendix.]

dehino'smin yathā dehe kaumāraṁ yauvanaṁ jarā |
tathā dehāntara prāptir dhīras tatra na muhyati || *13* ||

13. Just as the embodied Self passes through childhood, youth and old age [pertaining to that body], so [at death] it passes into another body. A wise man is not confused thereby.

Commentary

Because of the conviction that the Self is eternal, one does not grieve, when passing through the various physical transformations such as childhood, youth and old age etc.,

thinking that the Self is changing. Similarly, the wise, do not grieve when the Self passes into another body different from the present one.

The eternal jīvas being conditioned by beginingless Karma, become endowed with bodies according to their particular Karmas[28]. To overcome this bondage [of transmigration caused by Karma], embodied beings should perform their duties like war and other vocations and rites prescribed by the Scripture and which are appropriate to their social circumstances without attachment to the results of those actions[29]. Even to such aspirants for liberation, contacts with sense-objects give pleasure and pain, arising from cold, heat and all such other things. But these experiences are to be endured as long as the works enjoined by the Scriptures are being performed.

The Lord explains the significance immediately: —

mātrā sparśās tu kaunteya śītoṣṇa sukha-duḥkhadāḥ |
āgamāpāyino'nityās tāṁs titikṣasva bhārata || *14* ||

14. The contact of senses with their objects, O Arjuna, give rise to feelings of cold and heat, pleasure and pain. They come and go, they are impermanent, endure them, O Arjuna.

Commentary

As sound, touch, form, taste and smell along with their basis (the sense organs), are the effects of subtle elements [within the mind], they are called *Mātras* (*tanmātras* = "measurements"). The experience of these [objects of the senses] through means of the ears and other senses gives rise to feelings of pleasure and pain, in the form of heat and cold, softness and hardness etc. You should remain unperturbed by these contrasts while you discharge your prescribed duties [such as warfare]. When the Karmas, which cause bondage, are destroyed, this *'coming and going'* (transmigration) will end.

The Lord now explains the purpose of this endurance:

yaṁ hi na vyathayantyete puruṣaṁ puruṣarṣabha |
sama duḥkha sukhaṁ dhīraṁ so'mṛtatvāya kalpate || *15* ||

15. One who is unaffected by these, O chief of men, and to whom pain and pleasure are the same, that steadfast person alone is worthy of immortality.

Commentary

That person alone attains liberation, who, considers pain as inevitable as pleasure, and who engages in Duty without attachment to the results, and who is unperturbed by the blows of weapons which may be light or serious. A person like you, who cannot cope with grief will not obtain liberation. As the jīvas are immortal, what is to be done here, is to transcend the pairs of opposites — this is the meaning.

nāsato vidyate bhāvo nābhāvo vidyate sataḥ |
ubhayor api dṛṣṭo'ntas tvanayos tattva darśibhiḥ || *16* ||

16. The unreal can never come into being, the real never ceases to be. The conclusion about these two is discerned by the seers of truth.

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[28] All the conditions which we encounter in this life are the results of the accumulative actions done in our many past lives.

[29] According to traditional Brahminical orthodoxy the way to liberation is to rid oneself of all Karmic consequences by practicing complete disinterested action. Actions done merely as duty do not generate any fruit and thus after practicing this discipline for many births one can finally rid oneself of all Karmic residue. The problem arises with there being no guarantee of continued practice in the next birth! Rāmānuja introduces this concept in order to refute it later.

Commentary

'The unreal' refers to the physical body which can never be eternal. *'The real'* refers to the Self (jīva), which can never cease to exist. The final conclusion about these;— the body and the jīva, which we perceive, has been correctly realised by the seers of the Truth. The analysis has reached a definitive conclusion, therefore the term *'conclusion'* (anta) is used here. The gist is this: — non-existence (ie., perishableness) is the real nature of the body which is in itself insentient matter. Existence (ie., imperishableness) is the real nature of the sentient jīva.

[Here follows the justification for describing the body as *'unreal'* and as having *'never come into being.'* — Ed.]

Non-existence has, indeed, the character of destructibility, and what is Existent (Real) has the character of indestructibility, as Bhagavan Parāśara has said: —

> 'O Brahmin, apart from consciousness nothing else exists anywhere and at any time. Thus have I taught you what is *real* existence— how consciousness is real, and all else is unreal' (V.P. 2.12 vs. 43-45).

'The Supreme Reality is considered as imperishable by the wise. There is no doubt that what can be obtained from a perishable substance is also perishable.

> 'That entity which is never changed or modified by a change in time etc., is *real*! What is that entity, O King? (It is the *jīvātman* who retains its knowledge)' (V.P. 2.13.100).

It is seen from the foregoing that this (i.e., perishableness of the body and imperishableness of the jīva) is the reason for designating the jīva as 'existence' (Sattva) and the body as 'non-existence' (*asattva*). This verse has no bearing on the doctrine of *satkaryavada*[30] as such a theory has no relevance here.

avināśi tu tad viddhi yena sarvam idaṁ tatam |
vināśam avyayasyāsya na kaścit kartum arhati || *17* ||

17. Know that to be indestructible by which all this [material universe] is pervaded. None can cause the destruction of that — The Immutable.

Commentary

Know that the jīva, in its essential nature is imperishable. The whole of insentient matter, which is different (from the jīva) is pervaded ie. penetrated by the jīva.

Because of the extreme subtlety & pervasiveness of the jīva[31], it cannot be destroyed; for every substance other than the jīva is capable of being pervaded by the jīva because it is grosser than the jīva. Destructive agents like weapons, water, wind, fire etc., pervade the substances to be destroyed and disintegrate them. Even hammers and such other instruments generate air currents through violent contact with the objects and thereby destroy the objects. So, the essential nature of the Self being more subtle than anything else leads to the conclusion that it is imperishable.

antavanta ime dehā nityasy-oktāḥ śarīriṇaḥ |
anāśino'prameyasya tasmāt yuddhyasva bhārata || *18* ||

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[30] *Sat-karya-vada* is the doctrine common to some schools of Vedanta which holds that something cannot come out of nothing (ex nihilo), therefore the effects are latently present in the cause. Although Rāmānuja holds with this doctrine in general, he states that there is no reference to it in this verse.

[31] According to Visishtadvaita the jīva is a tiny atomic point of consciousness.

18. These bodies of the jīva (the embodied Self) are said to have an end, while the jīva itself is eternal, indestructible and incomprehensible. Therefore, fight O Bharata (Arjuna).

Commentary

The root *'di˙'* means 'to grow', hence bodies are known as *dehas,* because they are characterised by growth [and are compounds]. They have an end because they are naturally perishable; just as jars and such other things which are characterised by being compounds are seen to have an end. The bodies of the embodied jīva, which are made of a combination of elements, serve the purpose of experiencing the effects of Karmas, as stated in Brh. Up. 4:4:5;

'Auspicious embodiments are obtained through good actions'

Such bodies perish when the Karmas are exhausted. Furthermore the jīva is imperishable. Why? Because it cannot be quantified, it is the *subject* of all knowledge and can never be conceived of as the object of knowledge.

Besides, the jīva is not composed of any parts, because when one perceives:— 'I am the knower' — there is an awareness of unity throughout the body which is composed of different parts. It therefore follows that something other than the body is the perceiver and experiencer of the body and other external objects. Therefore the jīva or Self is considered as eternal because:—

(1) It is not a compound
(2) It is the knowing subject
(3) It pervades everything

The body on the contrary is perishable, because:—

(1) it is a compound,
(2) it is an instrument for experiencing the fruits of Karma
(3) it undergoes constant change, and
(4) it can be pervaded.

ya enaṁ vetti hantāraṁ yaścainaṁ manyate hatam |
ubhau tau na vijānīto nāyaṁ hanti na hanyate || *19* ||

19. One who deems the Self a slayer, and one who thinks of it as slain — both are ignorant; for the Self neither slays nor is slain.

Commentary

Though the root *'han'* (to slay) is directed at the Self [in the context], it signifies causing the separation of the jīva from the body and not the destruction of the jīva. Scriptural injunctions like *'You shall not cause injury to beings'* (?) and *'A Brahmin shall not be killed'* (?) indicate acts which are forbidden because they cause the separation of the jīva from the body.

mriyate vā kadācin nāyaṁ bhūtvā bhavitā vā na bhūyaḥ |
ajo nityaḥ śāśvato'yaṁ purāṇo na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre || *20* ||

20. The jīva is never born; it never dies; having been existent in the past, it will never cease to be [in the future]. Unborn, eternal, abiding and primeval, it is not slain when the body is slain.

Commentary

As the jīva is eternal for the reasons mentioned [above], and hence free from evolutionary changes, all the transitions of the insentient [body] like birth, growth, change and death, do not affect the jīva. The statement, *'It is never born, it never dies'* is in the present

tense, this means that birth and death which are presently being experienced by all embodied beings, do not [in fact] affect the jīvātman. The Statement *'Having been existent once, it will never cease to be'* means that this jīva, having emerged at the beginning of a Kalpa[32] will not cease to exist at the end of the Kalpa [ie., it will emerge again at the beginning of the following Kalpa unless it is liberated]. In other words — 'birth' at the beginning of a Kalpa in bodies such as those of Brahma and others, and 'death' at the end of a Kalpa as stated in the Scriptures, do not affect the jīva. Hence, the jīvas in all bodies, are unborn, and therefore eternal. The jīva is ever abiding, unconnected like matter is, with invisible modifications taking place. It is *primeval*;— this means that it existed from time immemorial; it is ever new ie, it is capable of being experienced always afresh.

vedāvināśinaṁ nityaṁ ya enam ajam avyayam |
kathaṁ sa puruṣaḥ pārtha kaṁ ghātayati hanti kam || *21* ||

21. If one knows this Self to be indestructible, unborn, unchanging and hence eternal— how and whom, O Arjuna, does he cause to be killed, and whom does one kill?

Commentary

How can a [realised] person be said to cause the death of the Self — be it the jīvātman existing in the bodies of gods, animals or plants? In other words the feeling of remorse:— 'I am the cause of the death of these, I kill these jīvas', is based solely upon ignorance about the true nature of the Self.

Let it be granted for argument's sake, that killing merely achieves a separation of the eternal jīvas from their temporary bodies. Even then, when the bodies, which are instruments for the experiencing of agreeable pleasures, perish, there is still no reason for sorrow at this separation.

vāsāṁsi jīrṇāni yathā vihāya navāni gṛhṇāti naro'parāṇi |
tathā śarīrāṇi vihāya jīrṇāny-anyāni saṁyāti navāni dehī || *22* ||

22. As a person casts off worn-out garments and puts on others that are new, so does the embodied Self cast off its worn-out bodies and enter into others that are new.

Commentary

The Scriptures declare that those who give up their bodies in a righteous war will obtain a more auspicious birth than before. The casting aside of worn-out garments and taking new and beautiful ones, can only be a cause of joy, as is generally experienced in this world. Once again Sri Krishna emphasises for easy understanding, the indestructibility of the jīva and confirms it thus:

nainaṁ chindanti śastrāṇi nainaṁ dahati pāvakaḥ |
na cainaṁ kledayanty-āpo na śoṣayati mārutaḥ || *23* ||

23. Weapons do not cut the jīva, fire does not burn it, waters do not wet it, and wind does not dry it.

acchedyo'yam adāhyo'yaṁ akledyo'śoṣya eva ca |
nityaḥ sarva-gataḥ sthāṇur acalo'yam sanātanaḥ || *24* ||

24. It cannot be cut; it cannot be burnt; it cannot be wetted and it cannot be dried, it is eternal, all-pervading, stable, immovable and primeval.

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[32] A Kalpa is a period of time equal to 4,320 million human solar years, it is a day of the Creator-god Brahma, his night too is of the same duration.

avyakto'yam acintyo'yam avikāryo'yam ucyate |
tasmād evaṁ viditvainaṁ nānuśocitum arhasi || 25 ||

25. This jīva is said to be unmanifest, inconceivable and unchanging. Therefore, knowing it thus, it does not befit you to grieve.

Commentary

The jīva cannot be demonstrated by those means of knowledge (*Pramanas*[33]) by which gross objects can be demonstrated; hence it is said to be unmanifest. The jīva is different in kind from objects susceptible to cutting etc., therefore It is inconceivable. Not having any of the nature, elements and constituent parts of any other [known] object, the jīva cannot even be conceived of, therefore it is unchanging and incapable of modifications. Thus, knowing this jīva to be possessed of the above mentioned qualities, it is not proper for you to feel grief for it.

atha cainaṁ nitya jātam nityaṁ vā manyase mṛtam |
tathāpi tvaṁ mahābāho naivaṁ śocitum arhasi || 26 ||

26. Or, if you consider this Self to be repeatedly born and repeatedly dying, even then, O Maha-bahu (Mighty-armed-one), it does not become you to feel grief.

jātasya hi dhruvo mṛtyur dhruvaṁ janma mṛtasya ca |
tasmād aparihārye 'rthe na tvaṁ śocitum arhasi || 27 ||

27. For death is indeed certain for everything that is born, and re-birth is certain for that which has died; therefore you should not grieve for what is unavoidable.

Commentary

Everything that is produced is certain to be destroyed — it has been proven to be unavoidable. Similarly, whatever has perished will inevitably be remanifest. How, it may be asked, should this be understood — that there is re-birth for that [entity] which has perished? Origination, annihilation etc., are merely particular states of existence. With regard to an entity which has entered into a stage known as origination, its transition into the opposite condition is called 'annihilation'. All evolving entities pass through an inevitable sequence of evolutionary stages. For example, clay exists as a lump, jug, a potsherd, and (finally) powder. Here, 'annihilation' refers to the transition to a succeeding stage by something which existed previously in a preceding stage. And the annihilation of one particular state is really birth for the next stage in the sequence.

avyaktādīni bhūtāni vyakta-madhyāni bhārata |
avyakta nidhanānyeva tatra kā parivedana || 28 ||

28. O Arjuna! All beings [in the universe] have a beginning that is unknown, a known middle and an unknown end. Why should there be anguish in relation to any of them?

Commentary

Humans and other sentient beings[34] exist as substances of which the previous states are unknown, their middle states in their present forms are known, and their future states are unknown. As they all thus follow a natural precession, there is no cause for grief.

[33] There are three means of knowing:— a. *pratyakṣa* — direct personal perception, b. *anumāna* — inference through the process of logical reasoning and c. *śabda* — verbal testimony from a reliable source. The jīva cannot be demonstrated either by direct perception or through inference but can only be known through Scriptural testimony.

[34] Humans, gods, *Asuras* (Jealous gods), *Pretas* (hungry ghosts) and *animals* (*tiryak*).

āścaryavat paśyati kaścid enam āścaryavad vadati tathaiva cānyaḥ ।
āścaryavac cainam anyaḥ śṛṇoti śātvāpy-enaṁ veda na caiva kaścit ॥ 29 ॥

29. One regards this Self as a wonder, likewise another speaks of it as a wonder; still another hears of it as a wonder; and even after hearing of it, one knows it not.

Commentary

Among the innumerable beings of the universe, someone, who by deep meditation has removed the effect of error (karma)[35] and has accumulated great merit, may realise this Self which is wonderful and distinct in kind from every other existing thing. Such a person tells someone else about it. Thus, another person hears of it, and even after hearing of it, no one knows it exactly as it really is. The term *'ca'* (and) implies that even amongst the sages, the preceptors and students, one with authentic realisation, authentic teaching and authentic hearing, is a rarity.

dehī nityam avadhyo'yaṁ dehe sarvasya bhārata ।
tasmāt sarvāṇi bhūtāni na tvaṁ śocitum arhasi ॥ 30 ॥

30. The jīva in all bodies, O Arjuna, is eternal and indestructible, therefore, it is not proper for you to feel grief for any being.

Commentary

All living beings from gods down to plants, even though they possess different external forms, are all similar and eternal in their real nature, as described above. Inequality and destructibility pertain only to the physical bodies. Therefore, it is not proper for you to grieve over any being from the gods down to plant life, let alone for Bhishma and such others.

sva-dharmam api cāvekṣya na vikampitum arhasi ।
dharmyāddhi yuddhāc-chreyo 'nyat kṣatriyasya na vidyate ॥ 31 ॥

31. Furthermore, considering also your own duty, it does not befit you to falter, because to a Kshatriya, there is no greater merit than a righteous war.

Commentary

To a Kshatriya, there is no greater good than engaging in a righteous war motivated by a just cause. It will be declared later on in the Gita: —

> 'Valour, non-defeat (by the enemies), fortitude, adroitness and also not fleeing from battle, Generosity, Lordliness; — these are the duties of the Kshatriya born of his very nature.' (18:43).

In the *Agnisomiya* sacrifice no real harm is caused to the animal victim; for according to the Vedic Texts, the victim — a goat, after abandoning an inferior body, will attain a higher rebirth, with a beautiful body. The Text pertaining to immolation declares: —

> 'O animal, by this (immolation) you never die, you are not destroyed. You will pass through happy paths to the realm of the gods, where the virtuous, not the sinful reach. May the god Savitar give you a suitable place.' (Yajñ, 4.6.9.46; Taitt. Br. iii 7.2).

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[35] According to Yoga psychology all thoughts, speech and actions leave a residue potential in the form of *saṁskāras* which then coalesce to form one's disposition and tendencies to act in particular ways. These actions produce karma in the form of pleasure or pain which again produce reactions which result in the strengthening of already existing *saṁskāras* (subliminal activators) or the creation of new ones. Meditation with a focussed mind has the capacity to destroy one's *saṁskāras* and thus leads to a purification of mind and liberation from the effects of karma.

Likewise the attainment of more beautiful bodies by those who die here in this war [which is like a sacrifice] has been declared in the Gita (2.22). Hence, just as a surgeon makes an incision and performs other surgical procedures for the purpose of curing a patient, the immolation of the sacrificial animal in the *Agnisomiya* and other sacrifices contributes to its welfare.

yadṛcchayā copapannaṁ svarga dvāram apāvṛtam |
sukhinaḥ kṣatriyāḥ pārtha labhante yuddham īdṛśam || 32 ||

32. Happy are the Kshatriyas, O Arjuna, to whom a war such as this comes of its own accord; it opens the gates to heaven.

Commentary

Only fortunate warriors, ie., those with a store of merit from past actions, will have the opportunity to participate in such a war as this, which has come unsought, which is the means for the attainment of immeasurable bliss, and which gives an unobstructed pathway to heaven.

atha-cet tvam imaṁ dharmyaṁ saṅgrāmaṁ na kariṣyasi |
tataḥ sva-dharmaṁ kīrtiṁ ca hitvā pāpam avāpsyasi || 33 ||

33. But if you do not fight this righteous war, you will be turning away from your duty and honour, and will be incurring blame.

akīrtiṁ cāpi bhūtāni kathayiṣyanti te'vyayām |
saṁbhāvitasya cākīrtir maraṇād-atiricyate || 34 ||

34. Furthermore, people will for ever recall your everlasting disgrace, and for an honourable man, dishonour is worse than death.

Commentary

You will then incur not merely the loss of all happiness and honour, but will be the object of contempt by all people. The qualified [critics] and even the unqualified, for the rest of time will ridicule you, saying, 'When the battle began Arjuna ran away.' If it be asked — 'So what?', the reply is:— 'To one who is honoured by all, for courage, prowess, valour, etc., the disgrace arising from being accused of the opposite of these attributes, is worse than death'. In other words it would be better for you to die than to endure such disgrace.

If it is asked — 'How could dishonour accrue to me, who am a hero, but have withdrawn from the battle only out of love and compassion for my relatives?' the reply is as follows:—

bhayād raṇād uparataṁ mansyante tvāṁ mahārathāḥ |
yeṣāṁ ca tvaṁ bahu-mato bhūtvā yāsyasi lāghavam || 35 ||

35. The great warriors will think that you have fled from the battle in fear. These men who held you in high esteem will then speak disparagingly of you.

Commentary

Great warriors like Karna, Duryodhana, etc., hitherto held you in high esteem as a worthy opponent. Now, by refraining from combat when it has already begun, you will appear to be a despicable coward. These great warriors will assume that you have withdrawn from fear, because courageous adversaries do not turn away from battle through affection and compassion for relatives but only through fear of their opponents. Moreover;—

avācya vādāṁśca bahūn vadiṣyanti tavāhitāḥ |
nindantas tava sāmarthyaṁ tato duḥkhataraṁ nu kim || *36* ||

36. Your enemies, slandering your prowess, will use words which should never be uttered. What could be more painful than that?

Commentary

Moreover, your enemies will make many slanderous and disparaging remarks about your ability, saying — 'How can this Arjuna stand before heroes like us, even for a moment? His [boasted] skill should be displayed anywhere else other than in our presence.' Can there be anything more painful to you than this? You yourself will understand that death is preferable to being subjected to such disparagement.

hato vā prāpsyasi svargaṁ jitvā vā bhokṣyase mahīn |
tasmād uttiṣṭha kaunteya yuddhāya kṛta-niścayaḥ || *37* ||

37. If slain, you shall gain heaven; if victorious, you shall enjoy the earth. Therefore, arise O Arjuna and resolve to fight.

Commentary

Therefore this war is a duty — when done without attachment to the results, it will become the means for attaining supreme bliss. Therefore, arise, be assured that engagement in war [here your incumbent duty] is the means for attaining the supreme goal — Liberation. This course of action alone is suitable for you O son of Kunti — this is the purport.

Sri Krishna then explains to the aspirant for liberation how to behave in war.

sukha-duḥkhe same kṛtvā lābhālābhau jayājayau |
tato yuddhāya yujyasva nainaṁ pāpam avāpsyasi || *38* ||

38. Considering pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat to be the same, prepare yourself for the battle. Thus, you shall not incur any blame[36].

Commentary

"Thus, knowing the Self to be eternally different from the body and unaffected by all its physical qualities, you should remain indifferent to pleasure and pain resulting from the inevitable blows of weapons etc., also be indifferent to gain and loss of wealth, victory and defeat, and remaining free from attachment to heaven and other such results, begin the battle considering it merely as your incumbent duty — thus, you will not incur blame." In this context *'pāpa'* [blame] means the results of injury to others — continuation of transmigratory existence which is misery. The purport is that one will be liberated from the bondage of reincarnation [through the unattached performance of one's dharma]."

eṣā te'bhihitā sāṅkhye buddhir yoge tvimāṁ śṛṇu |
buddhyā-yukto yayā pārtha karma-bandhaṁ prahāsyasi || *39* ||

39. This knowledge which has been taught to you [so far] concerns *Sankhya*. Now listen to the teaching concerning *Yoga*, endowed with which, O Arjuna, you shall cast off the bonds of Karma.

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[36] The term used is "*pāpa*" – defined as intentionally causing suffering to others, its opposite "*puṇya*" is defined as benefiting other beings.

Commentary

'Sankhya' here means 'intellect'; and the truth about the Self, which is ascertainable by the intellect, is known as *'Sankhyam'.* Concerning the nature of the Self which you should know, all the required teaching has been imparted to you (II.12 — 30). 'Yoga' in this context is the attitude (Buddhi) one should adopt for the performance of works. When this attitude is based upon the realisation of the true nature of the Self, it constitutes the means of attaining Liberation. The insight [Buddhi or attitude] that is required for transforming a [mundane] activity into a spiritual one leading to Liberation [Yoga], is now taught. Endowed with this insight, you will be able to cast off the bondage of Karma —*'Karma-bandha'* ie., the bondage of reincarnation or *Samsara*.

nehābhikrama-nāśo'sti pratyavāyo na vidyate |
svalpam apyasya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt || *40* ||

40. In this [practice], there is no wasted effort, nor any harm [transgression]. Even a little of this practice [Dharma ie. Karma Yoga] protects one from the great terror.

Commentary

In this practice of Karma Yoga there is no loss of initial effort. *'Abhikrama'* means invested effort. *'Nāśa'* means the loss of potential to succeed. In the practice of Karma Yoga, if some activity is begun and left unfinished, and the continuity is thus broken, it does not remain fruitless, as in the case of works undertaken expressly for their rewards. There is no negative result if the work is not continued. Even a little of this practice known as Karma Yoga or *Niṣkāma Karma* (actions done without desire for any reward) gives protection from the great fear, i.e., the fear of [the continuation of] transmigratory existence.

The same purport is explained later thus:— *'Neither in this world nor the next, O Arjuna, is one annihilated'.* (6;40). But in other works, religious and secular, when there is interruption, not only do they fail to produce results, but actually produce demerit.

vyavasāyātmikā buddhir ekeha kuru-nandana |
bahu-śākhā hyanantāśca buddhayo'vyavasāyinām || *41* ||

41. In this [Karma Yoga], O Arjuna, the resolute mind is one-pointed; the thoughts of the irresolute are many-branched and endless.

Commentary

Here, in every ritual prescribed by the Scriptures for the sake of Liberation, the *Buddhi* or psychological attitude should be characterised by focussing on this single aim. The term *'Vyavasāya'* (resolute) indicates unshakeable conviction which is firmly based upon the realisation of the true nature of the Self.

On the other hand, lack of single-minded focus characterises the psychological state concerned with the performance of rituals to fulfil specific desires. For the performance of these types of activity, the only understanding required is that the Self exists independently from the body. Such a general understanding is sufficient to qualify for performing the rituals leading to the fulfilment of particular desires. It does not require any deeper insight into the true nature of the Self. For, even without such realisation, the desire for heaven etc., can still arise, the pursuit of them, and the realisation of those goals can take place.

For this reason there is no contradiction in the teaching of the Scriptures. The contradiction negated here, is how the same prescribed Scriptural rites produce two

different results — (a) fulfilment of material desires and (b) Liberation. The difference in the psychological attitude accounts for the two differing results.

Therefore, since the ultimate goal of the Scriptural teachings is Liberation alone, the required mental disposition required for the seekers of Liberation — regarding all that is taught in the Scriptures too, is steadfastness only.

But the thoughts of the unsteady ones who are engaged in rituals purely for attaining such goals as heaven, sons, cattle, food etc., are endless, the results too being endless.

The general purport is this:— In performing obligatory (*nitya*) and periodic (*naimittika*) rituals, the desire for all material gains, primary and secondary, promised in the Scriptures, should be abandoned. Rituals should be performed with the understanding that Liberation— *Moksha,* is their sole purpose. These rituals should be performed in harmony with one's social status and stage in life, without any thought of selfish material gains. In addition, goal-orientated works (*kamya-karmas*) should also be performed according to one's capacity, after relinquishing all motivation for rewards and with the conviction that when performed in this way, they are a means to attain Moksha. Sri Krishna condemns those who perform rites for the attainment of objects of desire: —

yām imāṁ puṣpitāṁ vācaṁ pravadanty-avipaścitaḥ |
veda-vāda-ratāḥ pārtha nānyad astīti vādinaḥ || *42* ||

42. Flowery speech, O Partha is uttered by the unwise who rejoice in the words of the Vedas, declaring "there is nothing superior to this"!

Commentary

The ignorant, having little understanding, and being motivated only by the attainment of pleasure and power, speak grandiloquent language consisting of 'flowers' only and no fruit; appearing very impressive but lacking substance. They delight in talking *about* the Vedas — they are attached to heaven and such other results [promised in the *Karma-khāṇḍa* section of the Vedas] and thus they consider that there is nothing else, that is, owing to their intense attachment to these results, they declare that there is no goal superior to heaven etc.

kāmātmānaḥ svarga-parā janma-karma-phala-pradām |
kriyā-viśeṣa bahulāṁ bhogaiśvarya gatiṁ prati || *43* ||

43. They are full of desires and have heaven for their goal. They teach rebirth as the result of actions and engage in various specific rites for the attainment of pleasure and power.

bhogaiśvarya prasaktānāṁ tayāpahṛta cetasām |
vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ samādhau na vidhīyate || *44* ||

44. Those who cling to pleasure and power are attracted by these teachings [offering heavenly rewards] and are unable to develop the resolute will of a concentrated mind.

Commentary

With regard to those who crave pleasure and power and whose understanding is led astray by that grandiloquent speech about sense-gratification and controlling power, the attitude of determination mentioned earlier, will not arise in their minds [Samādhi]. *Samādhi* in this context means the [clear] mind in which enlightenment arises. These minds cannot develop the insight that all Vedic rituals are a means to attain Mokṣa when based on the conviction of the real nature of the Self. Hence, an aspirant for Liberation, should not be attached to rituals from a desire to attain material goals.

It may be questioned why the Vedas, which have more love for the jīvas than thousands of parents, and which are endeavouring to Liberate the jīvas, should thus prescribe rites which have trifling results and which produce only rebirth. It can also be asked if it is proper to abandon what is revealed in the Vedas. Sri Krishna replies to these questions:—

trai-guṇya viṣayā vedā nistrai-guṇyo bhavārjuna |
nir-dvandvo nitya satvastho nir-yoga kṣema ātmavān || 45 ||

45. The Vedas deal with the three Modes of Material Nature (*Guṇas*), O Arjuna. You must free yourself from these three Guṇas and from the pairs of opposites. Abide in pure *Sattva*; never care to acquire things and to protect what has been acquired, but be established in the ātman.

Commentary

The word *Traigunya* means the three *Guṇas— Sattva* (poise), *Rajas* (goal-orientation) and *Tamas* (passivity). Here the term *Traigunya* denotes persons in whom these three qualities are found. The Vedas, in prescribing rituals for the attainment of goals (Kamya-karmas) have such persons in view. Because of their great love, the Vedas teach what is good to all those in whom [either] Tamas, Rajas or Sattva preponderate. If the Vedas had not explained to these persons the means for the attainment of heaven etc., according to their respective dispositions, then those who are not interested in Liberation (owing to absence of Sattva and preponderance of Rajas and Tamas), would become completely lost. They would be confused about legitimate goals and the means for their attainment. Hence the Vedas deal with matters relevant to all the three dispositions.

The purport is:— "do not become controlled by the three Gunas and their state of interplay; do not allow such influence to develop. Be established in Sattva, in its state of purity without the contamination of the other two Gunas."

If it asked how this is possible, the reply is as follows; — "never care to acquire things nor secure what has already been acquired. While abandoning the acquisition of things that do not contribute to Self-realisation, abandon also the conservation of such things already acquired. You can thus develop control and thereby begin aspiring after the realisation of the essential nature of the ātman. *'Yoga'* is acquisition of what has not been acquired; *'Kshema'* is preservation of things already acquired. Abandoning these two is essential for a seeker after enlightenment (Self-realisation). If you conduct yourself in this way, the influence of Rajas and Tamas will be overcome and pure Sattva will develop."

yāvān artha udapāne sarvataḥ saṁplutodake |
tāvān sarveṣu vedeṣu brāhmaṇasya vijānataḥ || 46 ||

46. For a Brahmin who knows the Self, the Vedas are of as much use as a flooded water reservoir for a thirsty person.

Commentary

All that is taught in the Vedas is not suitable to be practiced by everyone. A reservoir, which is completely overflowing with water is constructed for all kinds of purposes like irrigation etc. The thirsty person will only use enough to quench his thirst and not the entire content. Likewise, an enlightened aspirant seeking liberation will only take from the Vedas that which contributes directly to Liberation, and nothing else.

karmaṇy-evādhikāras te mā phaleṣu kadācana |
mā karma phala hetur bhū mā saṅgo'stva karmaṇi || 47 ||

47. To work alone you have the right, and not to the fruits. Do not allow rewards to be your motive for action. Nor be attached to inaction.

Commentary

As regards obligatory, periodic and desiderative[37] acts taught in the Vedas and associated with some result or other, you, the aspirant established in Sattva, have the right only to perform them [as duty]. You have no right to the rewards known to be derived from such acts. It is works done with a motivation for some reward which is the cause of bondage. But acts done without motivation are a form of worship and a means for Liberation. Do not initiate works with the idea of reaping their fruits. Even when you, who are established in pure Sattva and are desirous of Liberation, perform acts, you should *not* look upon yourself as the agent. Likewise, you should not regard yourself as being the cause of even appeasing your own hunger and other such physical necessities. Later on it will be taught that both the idea of being an agent and the results of action, should be considered as belonging to the Modes of Material nature (Gunas) or to Me who am the Lord of all — This is the attitude one should have towards all work.

With regard to inaction, ie., abstaining from performance of duties, let there be no attachment to such inaction. Sri Krishna makes this clear in the following verse:—

yogasthaḥ kuru karmāṇi saṅgaṁ tyaktvā dhanañjaya ।
siddhy-asiddhyoḥ samo bhūtvā samatvaṁ yoga ucyate ॥ *48* ॥

48. Abandoning attachment and established in Yoga, perform works, viewing success and failure with an even mind. Equipoise is said to be Yoga.

Commentary

Abandoning the attachment to kingdom, relatives etc., establish yourself in Yoga, engage in war and other such activities. Perform these with equanimity as regards success and failure resulting from victory or defeat which are inherent in them. *Yoga* is defined in this verse as "equanimity with regard to success and failure."

Sri Krishna explains why He constantly repeats this teaching: —

dūreṇa hyavaraṁ karma buddhi-yogād dhanañjaya ।
buddhau śaraṇam anviccha kṛpaṇāḥ phala-hetavaḥ ॥ *49* ॥

49. Action with attachment [to results] is far inferior, O Arjuna, to action done with equanimity. Seek refuge in wisdom. Miserable are they, who act motived by reward.

Commentary

All other kinds of action are far inferior to those done with equanimity or wisdom which consists of the renunciation [prior to commencement] of the main result [of the particular activity] and remaining in a state of equanimity towards success or failure which are the secondary results. Between the two kinds of actions, the one done with equanimity and the other with motivation for rewards; the act performed with equanimity removes all the sufferings of Samsara and leads to Liberation which is the highest object of human existence. The actions done with a desire for rewards perpetuates the cycle of rebirth — *Samsara* — with the endless suffering which is its characteristic. Thus when an action is being done, take refuge in wisdom — *Buddhi* (equanimity of mind). Refuge means

[37] 'Desiderative acts' are those which are not mandatory but which are done out of personal choice with the desire to earn merit.

"abode." In other words abide in that state of wisdom. Those who act with attachment to the results, etc., are miserable, as they will continue to remain in *Samsara*.

buddhi-yukto jahātīha ubhe sukṛta duṣkṛte |
tasmād yogāya yujyasva yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam || *50* ||

50. Endowed with wisdom [equanimity] one discards here and now [the results] of good and evil deeds. Therefore devote yourself to Yoga — Yoga is skilful action

Commentary

One who has achieved mental equipoise in the performance of actions, relinquishes the results of good and bad Karmas which have accumulated from time immemorial causing endless bondage. *Yoga is skilful action* — that is, it is possible to achieve this state of mental balance when engaged in action, only through great skill.

karmajaṁ buddhi-yuktā hi phalaṁ tyaktvā manīṣiṇaḥ |
janma bandha vinirmuktāḥ padaṁ gacchanty-anāmayam || *51* ||

51. The wise who possess this mental disposition, having relinquished the fruits of action, are freed from the bondage of rebirth and go to the region beyond all suffering.

yadā te mohakalilaṁ buddhir vyati-tariṣyati |
tadā gantāsi nirvedaṁ śrotavyasya śrutasya ca || *52* ||

52. When your intellect has passed beyond the tangle of delusion, you will feel distaste regarding what you shall hear and what you have already heard.

Commentary

If you develop this attitude towards work and become freed from the effects of Karma, your intellect will become free from the web of delusion. The mass of [mental] impurities caused by unskilful actions manifests as delusion which generates attachment to trivial results. Once you have transcended this delusion, you will then spontaneously develop a distaste for them all and will desire to renounce.

Sri Krishna now teaches the goal called Self-realisation (Yoga) which results from the performance of duty which is based on the knowledge of the real nature of the Self gained through the refinement of the mind by practice of skilful means.

śruti vipratipannā te yadā sthāsyasi niścalā |
samādhāv-acalā buddhis tadā yogam avāpsyasi || *53* ||

53. When your intellect, well enlightened by listening [to Me] and firmly placed, remains unshaken in a concentrated mind, then you will attain the vision of the Self (Yoga).

Commentary

Here *'śruti'* means listening [and not the Veda]. The state of Yoga is reached when the intellect, which has become exceptionally sharpened by listening to the teaching, begins the quest for the eternal, unsurpassed and subtle Self. The intellect then becomes firmly fixed in single minded concentration and remains unshaken. In such a concentrated mind, purified by the performance of duties without attachment, the state of true Yoga will arise, which is the direct realisation of the Self (ātman).

What is said amounts to this: — Karma Yoga, which presupposes the knowledge of the real nature the ātman obtained from the Scriptures, leads to a firm devotion to knowledge, known as the "state of steady wisdom"; and the state of "steady wisdom", which takes the

form of a dedication to [the pursuit of] wisdom, generates the realisation of the Self; this state of realisation is here called Yoga.

Arjuna, having been taught thus, raises questions about the nature of "steady wisdom" which constitutes the means for the attainment of Yoga and which itself is attainable through Karma Yoga consisting of unmotivated action, and also about the mode of behaviour of one of "steady wisdom."

arjuna uvāca

sthita-prajñāsya kā bhāṣā samādhisthasya keśava |
sthita-dhīḥ kiṁ prabhāṣata kim āsīta vrajeta kim || *54* ||

Arjuna said:
54. What is the mode of speech, O Krishna, of one of steady wisdom who is established in the control of the mind? What will one of steady wisdom say? How does he sit? How does he move?

śrī bhagavān uvāca

prajahāti yadā kāmān sarvān pārtha manogatān |
ātmany-evātmanā tuṣṭaḥ sthita-prajñās tad-ocyate || *55* ||

The Lord said:
55. When one relinquishes all the desires arising in the mind, O Arjuna, when one is satisfied in oneself with the Self, then one is said to be of steady wisdom (*sthita-prajña*).

Commentary

This is the highest form of devotion to enlightenment. Then, the lower state, not far below it, of one established in *steady intellect*, is described;—

duḥkheṣv-anudvigna-manāḥ sukheṣu vigata spṛhaḥ |
vīta-rāga bhaya krodhaḥ sthita-dhīr munir ucyate || *56* ||

56. One whose mind is not perturbed by pain, who does not hanker after pleasures, who is free from desire, fear and anger — is called a sage of steady intellect (*sthita-dhi*).

Commentary

Even when there are reasons for grief like separation from beloved ones, the enlightened one's mind is not perturbed. He has no craving for sense enjoyment, he has no hankering for them. He is free from desire, fear and anger;— *desire* is craving for objects not yet obtained. *Fear* is mental agitation produced by the awareness of factors which cause separation from objects that one loves, or by encountering that which is undesirable. *Anger* is a disturbed state of mind which produces aggression directed at another sentient being who is perceived as the cause of separation from the beloved object or when confronting what is undesirable. An aspirant of this sort, who constantly meditates on the Self, is said to have attained *steady intellect.*

Then, the next state below this is described:

yaḥ sarvatrān-abhisnehas tat tat prāpya śubhāśubham |
nābhinandati na dveṣṭi tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā || *57* ||

57. He who has no attachment anywhere, who, when encountering the agreeable or the disagreeable feels neither attraction nor aversion — his wisdom is firmly established (*prajñā-pratiṣṭhitā*).

Commentary

One who has no attraction at all for pleasing objects, ie., who is indifferent to them, and who does not feel either attraction nor repulsion when involved with, or separated from

attractive or repulsive objects respectively, who neither delights in the former, nor is repulsed by the latter — has attained *established wisdom*.

Sri Krishna now mentions the next lower state:—

yadā saṁharate cāyaṁ kūrmo'ṅgānīva sarvaśaḥ |
indriyāṇīndriyārthebhyas tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā || *58* ||

58. When one is able to withdraw the senses from the objects of senses on every side, as a tortoise withdraws its limbs, then one's wisdom is firmly established.

Commentary

When one is able to draw the sense-organs away from the sense-objects like a tortoise withdrawing all its limbs, and fixing its mind on its Self — he too is said to have attained steady wisdom.

Thus there are four stages in the progression to enlightenment[38], each stage giving rise to the succeeding stage. Now Sri Krishna speaks of the difficulties of [both] the attainment of resolute dedication to enlightenment and the means of that attainment.

viṣayā vinivartante nirāhārasya dehinaḥ |
rasa-varjaṁ raso'pyasya paraṁ dṛṣṭvā nivartate || *59* ||

59. The objects of senses turn away from the abstinent one, leaving only the predilection behind. Even this predilection turns away when the Supreme is seen.

Commentary

From one who has withdrawn the senses from sense-objects, these sense-objects, being rejected, turn away, but not the predilection for them. Predilection (*rasa*) means 'hankering'. The meaning is that the hankering for the sense-objects does not vanish by abstinence alone. But even this hankering will evaporate, when one realises that the essential nature of the ātman is superior to the sense-objects and that this Self-realisation gives greater pleasure than any sense gratification.

yatato hyapi kaunteya puruṣasya vipaścitaḥ |
indriyāṇi pramāthīni haranti prasabhaṁ manaḥ || *60* ||

60. The turbulent senses, O Arjuna, indeed forcefully carry away the mind of even a wise person, even though he is continually striving [to control them].

Commentary

The craving for sense-gratification will not be overcome except by the direct experience of the ātman. While the craving for sense gratification remains, the senses of even a wise person who is continually striving to subdue them, become intractable. Thus, the subduing of the senses depends on the realisation of the ātman, and the realisation of the ātman depends on the subduing of the senses. Consequently, because of this mutual [contradictory] dependence, resolute dedication to enlightenment is difficult to achieve.

tāni sarvāṇi saṁyamya yukta āsīta matparaḥ |
vaśe hi yasyendriyāṇi tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā || *61* ||

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[38] These four stages correspond to Patanjali's four stages of esoteric (*antaraṅga*) Yoga: — *pratyahāra* — withdrawl of the mind from sense objects; *dhāraṇa* — focussing the mind; *dhyāna* — steady contemplation; *samādhi* — absorption, enstacy.

61. Having controlled all the senses, one should abide in the state of meditation, having Me as Supreme [goal]; for, one who has controlled his senses, wisdom is firmly established.

Commentary

With a desire to overcome this mutual dependence between the subduing of the senses and Self-realisation, one has to conquer the senses which are difficult to subdue on account of attachment to sense-objects. So, focussing the mind on Me who am the only worthy object for meditation, let one remain steadfast. When the mind is focussed on Me, it becomes purified by the burning away of all mental impurities and becomes free from attachment to the senses. It is then able to bring the senses under control. With the senses under control the mind will be able to experience the Self. As it is said in Vishnu Purana:—

> 'As the leaping fire fanned by the wind burns away a forest of dry trees, so Vishnu, who is in the hearts of all the Yogins, destroys all the hindrances to self-realisation.' (V.P. 6;7-74)

dhyāyato viṣayān puṁsaḥ saṅgas teṣūpajāyate |
saṅgāt sañjāyate kāmaḥ kāmāt krodho'bhijāyate || 62 ||

62. When one deliberates upon sense-objects, attachment to them arises; from attachment is born desire, from desire arises anger;

Commentary

Indeed, when a person, attempts to sever attachment to sense-objects, but does not focus the mind on Me, even though he may control the senses, contemplation on sense-objects is unavoidable on account of the sub-liminal activators (*samskāras*) accumulated from time immemorial. Again attachment develops fully in one who deliberates upon sense-objects. *'From attachment arises desire'* — What is termed desire (*kāma*) is indeed, nothing other than a more developed stage of attachment (*sangha*). After reaching that stage, it is impossible for one to refrain from indulgence in sense-gratification. *'From desire arises anger'* — when a desire arises without access to its object, a negative emotion arises against persons nearby, to the effect 'Our desire is thwarted by these persons' — this is anger (*krodha*).

krodhād-bhavati saṁmohaḥ saṁmohāt smṛti-vibhramaḥ |
smṛti-bhramśād buddhi-nāśo buddhir-nāśāt praṇaśyati || 63 ||

63. From anger arises delusion; from delusion, the loss of memory; from the loss of memory, the destruction of discrimination; and with the destruction of discrimination, one is lost.

Commentary

Delusion (confusion) is lack of discrimination between what ought to be done and what ought not to be done. In such a state, one does anything and everything. Then follows the *failure of memory* — ie. of the impressions of the earlier successes of sense control — when one attempts again to control the senses.

The destruction of discrimination means that the effect of previous efforts made at Self-realisation will be negated. From the elimination of discrimination one becomes lost, ie., is again immersed in Samsara.

rāga-dveṣa viyuktais tu viṣayān indriyaiś-caran |
ātma-vaśyair vidheyātmā prasādam adhigacchati || 64 ||

64. But one who is self-controlled, moving among the sense-objects with the senses under restraint, free from attraction and aversion, attains tranquillity.

Commentary

Having focussed the mind on Me in the way already described, one who views the sense-objects with indifference; with the senses under control and free from aversion and attraction through the eradication of all impurities of mind[39] — such a person is self-disciplined, and serene.

prasāde sarva-duḥkhānāṁ hānir asyopajāyate |
prasanna-cetaso hyāśu buddhiḥ paryavatiṣṭhate || *65* ||

65. In that state of serenity all sorrow is overcome; for in the case of one with a serene mind, the Buddhi soon becomes well established.

Commentary

When the mind becomes serene, one attains freedom from all suffering originating from contact with material nature (*Prakrti*). When one's mind is serene, i.e., is free from the errors which prevent Self-realisation, the intellect (*Buddhi*), becomes absorbed in the ātman, and immediately becomes steady. Thus, when the mind is serene, freedom from all sorrow surely arises.

nāsti buddhir-ayuktasya na cāpyuktasya bhāvanā |
na cābhāvayataḥ śāntir aśāntasya kutaḥ sukham || *66* ||

66. There is no right disposition (*Buddhi*) for the un-integrated, for him there is no contemplation on the ātman, and for one without contemplation on the ātman there is no peace; and for one lacking peace where is happiness?

Commentary

When one does not focus [and integrate] the mind on Me but engages only in the attempt to control the senses by self-exertion, the *Buddhi* or the right disposition that is associated with the pure ātman cannot arise. Therefore one fails in the practice of meditation. One who does not reflect upon the nature of the pure ātman, again begets the desire for sense gratification. How can eternal and unsurpassed bliss be generated in one who is not serene but is attached to sense-gratification? [40]

indriyāṇāṁ hi caratāṁ yan mano'nuvidhīyate |
tad asya harati prajñāṁ vāyur nāvam ivāṁbhasi || *67* ||

67. For, when the mind follows the senses — experiencing their objects, the understanding is carried away by them as the wind carries away a ship on the waters.

Commentary

The mind, which is allowed to be accommodating, loses its inclination towards the realisation of the pure ātman — it succumbs to the temptation of the sense-objects. Just as a contrary wind forcibly carries away a ship at sea — in the same manner enlightenment also is carried away from such a mind.

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[39] The eradication of the impurities of the mind refers to the eradication of the *vāsanas* or residue habitual pattern formations which result in aversion and attraction to objects and subsequent actions in their regard.

[40] The gist of this teaching is that without the aid of devotion to and meditation upon Krishna, the effort to control the senses by one's will power alone will end in failure.

tasmād yasya mahābāho nigṛhītāni sarvaśaḥ |
indriyāṇīndriyārthebhyas tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā || 68 ||

68. Therefore, O mighty-armed one, he whose senses are restrained from pursuing sense gratification in every way, his wisdom is firmly established.

Commentary

Therefore, one whose mind is focused on Me, the auspicious object for meditation, and whose senses are thereby restrained from sense-objects in every way, in his mind alone wisdom is firmly established.

yā niśā sarva bhūtānāṁ tasyāṁ jāgarti saṁyamī |
yasyāṁ jāgrati bhūtāni sā niśā paśyato muneḥ || 69 ||

69. The self-controlled one is awake during what is night for all beings, when all beings are awake, that is the night to the enlightened one.

Commentary

The enlightened mind which is centred on the ātman is like night — dark and obscure for all other beings. One who has subdued the senses and is serene, is awake to the nature of the ātman; that is — fully enlightened. All beings are "awake" — ie. actively interacting with the objects of the senses like sound and the rest. But such sense awareness is like night — obscure to the enlightened one who has realised the Self.

apūryamāṇam acala pratiṣṭhaṁ samudram āpaḥ praviśanti yadvat |
tadvat kāmā yaṁ praviśanti sarve sa śāntim āpnoti na kāmakāmī || 70 ||

70. One into whom all desires enter, as the rivers enter the plenitude of the ocean which remains undisturbed, attains to peace, and not one who hankers after objects of desire.

Commentary

The river flows into the sea which is already replete and is thus always the same, that is, unchanging in volume. The sea exhibits no perceptible increase or decrease, whether the waters of rivers enter it or not. Even so do all objects of desire enter into a self-controlled one, they produce only sense impressions but no reaction. Such a person will attain peace. In other words he alone attains peace, who by reason of the contentment associated with the vision of the Self, remains undisturbed when objects of sense-gratification come within the range of the senses. This is not the case with one who constantly seeks sense-gratification. One who is agitated by sound and other objects, never attains peace.

vihāya kāmān yaḥ sarvān pumāṁś-carati niḥspṛhaḥ |
nirmamo nirahaṅkāraḥ sa śāntim adhigacchati || 71 ||

71. The individual who, abandoning all desires, perseveres without longing, devoid of the notion of possession and the sense of egoistic self-importance — he attains peace.

Commentary

The person, who wants peace must abandon all sense-objects. He should have no craving for them. He should not entertain the sense of 'mine-ness' regarding them, and should not love the body — these concepts of possession and ego arise from the misconception that

the body, which is really non-self, is the Self. One who lives in this way attains peace after realising the Self.

eṣā brāhmī-sthitiḥ pārtha naināṁ prāpya vimuhyati |
sthitvā'syām antakāle'pi brahma-nirvāṇam ṛcchati || 72 ||

72. This is called the *Brahmi-state*, O Arjuna, attaining which none is deluded. By abiding in this state even at the hour of death, one attains Nirvana.

Commentary

The *Brahmi-state* which is characterised by immutable wisdom, is defined as the state of performing actions without motivation for rewards, which is preceded by the [theoretical] knowledge of the eternal ātman. It is the *Brahmi-state*, which secures the attainment of the *Brahman* (the ātman). After attaining such a state, one is not deluded, that is, will not again enter into the cycle of transmigration. Reaching this state even during the last years of life, one attains the blissful Brahman (the realisation of the ātman) which is full of beatitude. The meaning is that one attains Self-realisation which consists of pure bliss.

Summary

Thus in the second chapter, the Lord wanted to remove the delusion of Arjuna, who did not know the real nature of the ātman and also did not realise that the enterprise called 'war' [here an ordained duty] is a means for actualising Sankhya or realisation of the Self. Arjuna was under the delusion that the body is the individual Self, and dominated by this delusion, had retreated from battle. He was therefore taught (a) the knowledge called 'Sankhya' — the understanding of the real nature of the Self, and (b) 'Yoga' — the path of action done without attachment to or motivation for rewards. These two together are directed to the attainment of steady wisdom (*Sthita-prajña*)

This has been clarified in the following verse by Sri Yamunacharya: —

"Saṅkhya and Yoga, which comprehend within their scope the understanding of the nature of the eternal Self and the practical way of disinterested action respectively, were imparted in order to remove Arjuna's delusion. Through them the state of steady wisdom can be reached."

hariḥ oṁ tatsat
iti śrīmad-bhagavad-gītāsupaniṣatsu
brahma-vidyāyāṁ yoga śāstre
śrī-kṛṣṇārjuna saṁvāde saṅkhya yogo nāma
dvitīyo'dhyāyaḥ

Thus in the Upanishad of the Glorious Bhagavad Gita
The science of the Eternal, the Scripture of Yoga
The dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna
Ends the second discourse entitled —
"**The Yoga of Knowledge (Sankhya)**"

Chapter 3

Karma Yogaḥ

Communion through Action

Summary of the Teaching

The terms cognition (*Vedana*), worship (*Upāsana*), meditation (*Dhyāna*), etc. are synonyms for "Bhakti" [devoted meditation] which is focussed and persistent. This [practice] constitutes the means for realising the Supreme Person who is described in the Veda to be the goal of all seekers of Liberation. The Supreme Person is free from even a vestige of blemish like nescience (ignorance), and is endowed with a plethora of countless auspicious, unsurpassed attributes beyond all limitations. For teaching such Bhakti the [preliminary] doctrines concerning the true nature of the Self have been given in Chapter 2. This Self-realisation is an accessory to Bhakti, as was taught by Prajapati (Chandogya Upanishad 8;7.1) and elsewhere too. The intellectual understanding of the Self leads to Karma Yoga — doing work without attachment to their fruits — which in turn leads to Jñāna Yoga (Meditation) which brings about a complete and direct realisation of the Self.

The Dahāra Vidya Teaching

Regarding the teaching of Prajapati — the [intellectual] understanding of the essential nature of the ātman by the seeker, is a prerequisite to obtaining the [direct] knowledge of the Supreme Brahman. This was imparted in the instruction of the Dahara Vidya (subtle teaching) ie., that Brahman is the ethereal space within the heart. It was described thus:— 'He who after learning about the Self, meditates upon Him' (Ibid.) — Then follows the teaching about the nature of the individual Self as being incorporeal and transcending the three states of consciousness; the externalised, the internalised and the unconscious state. Then the teaching is concluded with the statement of the fruits of this Dahāra-vidya thus:—

> 'Likewise, the ātman, rising up from the body, reaches the Supreme Light and manifests itself in its own true nature' (Cha. Up. 8;12;2).

There are also other examples — in the passage beginning with —

> 'The enlightened one leaves behind joy and sorrow after realising Brahman by the knowledge of the Self achieved through Yogic meditation' (Katha. Up. 2;12).

The knowledge of the ātman is declared as essential by the words "By cognition brought about by Yogic meditation" — because it is a preliminary stage to the knowledge of the Supreme Brahman enjoined in the words — "After knowing Brahman."

The essential nature of the ātman is then inquired into in such texts as:—

> 'The Self is not born, nor does it die' (Ibid. .2;18) .

Then beginning with the passage;—

> 'He is more subtle than the most subtle' (Ibid 2;20),

— the nature of the Supreme Self, meditation upon Him and the nature of mind practice through Bhakti are all elucidated by means of such texts as;—

'The wise one, after knowing Him to be the Self, who is great and omnipresent, does not grieve" (Ibid:, 1 2 22)

and

> 'This Self cannot be obtained through Vedic teaching, nor by meditation, nor by much hearing [of teachings]; whomsoever this Self chooses, by him alone is it reached. To him this Self reveals its own form' (Ibid., 2 23)

The whole lesson is concluded with a verse that mentions the fruits of the realisation of the Supreme Brahman:—

> 'But the person who has discriminative understanding for his charioteer, and the mind for his reins, he reaches the destination of his journey and that is the highest abode of Vishnu." (ibid 3;9)

The Self-realisation which is the preparation and the means of attaining Bhakti (Devotion) are explained in the next four chapters.

arjuna uvāca

jyāyasī cet karmaṇaste matā buddhir-janārdana |
tat kiṃ karmaṇi ghore māṃ niyojayasi keśava || 1 ||

Arjuna said:
1. If, O Krishna you consider that Buddhi (mind-development) is superior to Karma (action), why do you urge me to engage in this terrible deed?

Commentary

> If the steadfast practice of meditation is the only means to Self-realisation, then how can one accept the idea that commitment to action (Karma Yoga) also leads to Self-realisation? — this is the question. It was taught before that steadfast dedication to mind-development as the means to attain Self-realisation would arise through the cessation of activities of the senses, including mental activity in relation to their respective objects such as sound etc. If Self-realisation is to be attained through the cessation of the activities of the senses, then surely I should be encouraged to relinquish all actions and engage myself solely in the practice of meditation. Why then, do you encourage me to engage in this dreadful deed, which is a sense-activity and is thus an obstacle to Self-realisation?

vyāmiśreṇaiva vākyena buddhiṃ mohayasīva me |
tad ekaṃ vada niścitya yena śreyoham-āpnuyām || 2 ||

2. You confuse me with statements that seem to contradict each other; tell me for certain the one way by which I could reach the highest good.

Commentary

> On the one hand you teach the steadfast practice of meditation as the means for Self-realisation together with restraining the senses, and on the other — you exhort me to action which is opposed to meditation, as a means to the same Self-realisation — these statements are self-contradictory and confusing. Therefore tell me clearly how I may take a determined course and attain the Supreme State.

śrī bhagavān uvāca

loke'smin dvividhā niṣṭhā purā proktā mayā'nagha |
jñāna-yogena sāṅkhyānāṃ karma-yogena yoginām || 3 ||

The Blessed Lord said:
3. In this world there is a two-fold path as I have said before, O sinless one: Jñāna Yoga for the Sankhyans and Karma Yoga for the Yogins.

Commentary

"You have not properly understood what I taught you before!" This world, is filled with people with varying degrees of aptitude, I have therefore taught two forms of discipline — the way of meditation (Jñāna Yoga) and the way of action (Karma Yoga), according to the aptitudes of the aspirants. There is no contradiction in this. The ability to meditate does not spontaneously come to everyone in the world in whom the desire for Liberation has arisen. But one who acts, unmotivated by the desire for rewards but purely as a means of worshiping the Supreme Being becomes free of mental impurities, and by restraining the senses, one becomes competent for the practice of meditation.

Consequently, firm commitment to meditation upon the ātman [*Jñāna Yoga*] is taught specifically to the Sankhyans — those persons who are competent to observe the discipline of meditation; and Karma Yoga to Yogins — those qualified for the path of action.

Sankhya means Buddhi (intellectual or mental disposition) and those who are endowed with the mental disposition directed only at Self-realisation are Sankhyans.

Karma Yoga is appropriate for those whose minds (*buddhi*) are agitated by sense-objects, whereas those whose minds are not thus agitated, are qualified for Jñāna Yoga. Therefore nothing contradictory and confusing is taught.

na karmaṇām anārambhān naiṣkarmyaṃ puruṣo'śnute |
na ca saṃnyasanād-eva siddhiṃ samādhigacchati || *4* ||

4. No one achieves freedom from activity (*Naiś-karmyam*) by abstaining from works; and no one ever attains success by mere renunciation of works.

Commentary

Simply by abstaining from the performance of works enjoined by the Scriptures, in the pursuit of meditation, one does not attain freedom from Karma, nor by ceasing the performance of such enjoined Scriptural actions which have already been started. For spiritual progress is achieved only by doing work without attachment to the fruits and as a means of worshipping the Supreme Being. Hence, without works (*Karma-niṣṭha*), one does not achieve realisation (*Jñāna-niṣṭha*). Those who have not worshipped Govinda through skilful action done without attachment to results and whose beginingless and endless accumulation of demerit has not thus been annulled; will find steady contemplation on the ātman to be almost impossible. It can be done only if it is preceded by the attainment of a state in which the senses have been freed from agitation.

This view alone the Lord now affirms:—

na kaścit kṣaṇam-api jātu tiṣṭhaty-akarma-kṛt |
kāryate hy-avaśaḥ karma sarvaḥ prakṛtair-guṇaiḥ || *5* ||

5. Verily no one can remain even for a moment, without performing action; for everyone is forced to act, helplessly indeed, by the Material Modes [Gunas].

Commentary

Every one, even after resolving not to do anything, is forced to act — impelled to act according to the *Gunas* [Modes] of *Prakrti* [Nature]. The *Gunas* or 'Modes of Nature' are *Sattva* (cohesive tendency — centripetal attraction), *Rajas* (revolving tendency) and *Tamas* (disintegrative tendency — centrifugal attraction). These [tendencies] are pre-determined by one's previous Karma. Consequently, Jñāna Yoga can be practiced only after the mind has been purified by annulling the accumulation of negative tendencies through the practice of Karma Yoga, and by bringing Sattva and other Gunas under control.

Otherwise, one who engages in mind-practice becomes an hypocrite: —

karmendriyāṇi saṃyamya ya āste manasā smaran |
indriyārthān vimūḍhātmā mithyācāraḥ sa ucyate || *6* ||

6. One who, restraining the organs of action, sits contemplating on the objects of senses, is a deluded person and an hypocrite.

Commentary

A hypocrite (*mithyācāraḥ*) is one whose actions do not harmonise with one's resolve. [Such a person] is one whose mind and other five senses are not subdued— having failed to neutralise the accumulated demerit, and is none-the-less struggling for Self-realisation. His mind is dragged away from the Self because it is so attached to sense objects, and thus he allows the mind to dwell upon them — by practising meditation in this way, one becomes perverted and lost.

yastv-indriyāṇi manasā niyamyārabhate'rjuna |
karmendriyaiḥ karma-yogam asaktasya viśiṣyate || *7* ||

7. But one who, subduing the senses by the mind, O Arjuna, begins to practice Karma Yoga through the organs of action and who is free from attachment — excels.

Commentary

Consequently, one who, aspiring for Self-realisation, acts in accordance with Scriptural teachings — doing such actions as were practiced earlier; being naturally inclined to work, but doing them as Karma Yoga — renouncing all attachment to rewards, by reason of there being no chance of error, is superior to one practicing meditation.

niyataṃ kuru karma tvaṃ karma jyāyayo hy-akarmaṇaḥ |
śarīra-yātrā'pi ca te na prasiddhayed akarmaṇaḥ || *8* ||

8. You must perform your obligatory duties; for action is superior to non-action (meditation). For not even the maintenance of the body is possible by inaction.

Commentary

'Obligatory' (*niyatam*) indicates 'concomitant' (*vyaptam*); for action is invariably concomitant (coincidental) with the state of being embodied. This conjunction [of the Self] with material Nature (*Prakrti*) has arisen due to beginingless subtle impressions (*samskāras*). You must act, because the performance of action is natural and may not cause misadventure by reason of its also being obligatory. Action is superior to the practice of meditation. Even in the case of one qualified for the practice of meditation, unmotivated action indeed is better, because meditation is difficult to perform and susceptible to misadventure, as it is not a natural process and one may not have practiced it previously. Consequently, we should understand that because Self-realisation is included in Karma Yoga — it is superior.

This affirmation of the superiority of Karma Yoga (disinterested work) over Jñāna Yoga (meditation on the Self) remains valid even when one is competent to practice meditation. For, if one abandons all activities to practice meditation, then, while practicing meditation, even the basic maintenance of the body, which is essential even for a meditator will not be achieved. Performing the obligatory pañca-mahā-yajñas with the help of honestly earned wealth, the body should be sustained by consuming the remnants [of food offered] after such performances. This is clearly indicated in scriptural texts like;—

" When the food is pure, the Sattva (mind) becomes pure; when the Sattva is pure, then the mindfulness (meditation) will be steady." (Cha. Up, 7.26.2).

Sri Krishna himself will declare —

"The sinful ones who cook food for their own sake eat sin." (3;13)

Obligatory rites (*nitya karma*) and periodic rites (*naimitta karma*) and the pañca-mahā-yajñas must be carried out by one who meditates too, as the body must be sustained until perfection is attained. Besides, Self-realisation is an integral part of Karma Yoga, as it involves the contemplation of the ātman as not being an agent. It is also in harmony with the natural order (Prakrti). Karma Yoga, is for these reasons easier and it is free from possibility of failure. Therefore, you must perform Karma Yoga only — this is the purport of the verse.

If it is argued that any action such as earning money implies 'I-ness, 'My-ness' etc. and will therefore distract the senses, and the Karma Yogi will again be bound through the subtle impressions [samskāras] of his acts then;

yajñārthāt karmaṇo'nyatra loko'yaṃ karma bandhanaḥ |
tad-arthaṃ karma kaunteya mukta saṅgas-samācara || *9* ||

9. This world is bound by actions other than those performed as sacrifice. O Arjuna, you must perform work to this end [for sacrifice alone], free from attachment.

Commentary

People become subject to the bondage of Karma only when work is done for personal gain, but not when work is performed, or money acquired for the purpose of sacrifice and other acts of charity which are prescribed in the Scriptures. So you must perform acts like the acquisition of wealth for the purpose of sacrifice (*Yajña*). In doing so, overcome attachments generated by the pursuit of personal ambitions, and then do your work in the spirit of sacrifice. When a person, free from attachment, acts for the sake of sacrifice, the Supreme Being, propitiated by sacrifice grants him the calm vision of the Self after destroying the subtle impressions of Karmas, which have accumulated from time without beginning.

Sri Krishna stresses the need for sustaining the body only by the remnants of sacrifices in respect of those who are devoted to all [the four approved] goals of human life (1. *Dharma* — social duties, 2. *Artha* — material prosperity. 3. *Kāma* — pleasure, 4. *Mokṣa* — liberation from suffering). He denounces those who nourish the body by things that have not been offered in sacrifice: —

saha yajñāiḥ prajāḥ sṛṣṭvā purovāca prajāpatiḥ |
anena prasaviṣyadhvam eṣa vo'stviṣṭa kāmadhuk || *10* ||

10. In the beginning the Lord of all beings, created humans along with the sacrifice, saying: 'By this shall you prosper; this shall be the cow of plenty granting all your desires.'

Commentary

Because of the Vedic text — 'The Lord of Universe…..' (*patim viśvasya* ……. M. Nar. Up. 11.3), it is justifiable to take the term Prajāpati (Lord of Beings) in its wider sense and interpret it to mean Nārāyaṇa who is the Lord of all beings, the 'Creator of the Universe' and the 'Self of all beings' and the 'Supreme Abode'. In the beginning, at the time of creation, the Lord of beings, saw all beings submerged within Himself, in a state devoid of the distinctions of name and form. They were helpless due to their total identification with insentient matter and were incapable of attaining the four goals of human existence. The supremely Compassionate One, with a desire to redeem them, projected them into being together with sacrifice in order that they might perform sacrifices as His worship and said:— 'By this sacrifice, shall you prosper', ie. accomplish your development and prosperity. May this institute of sacrifice fulfil your supreme desire of liberation (Moksha) and also the other desires that are in conformity with it. How, then should this be done?

devān bhāvayetānena te devā bhāvayantu vaḥ |
parasparaṃ bhāvayantaḥ śreyaḥ paramavāpsyatha || *11* ||

11. By this, may you nurture the gods, and the gods will nurture you [in return]. Thus, nurturing one another, you will obtain the highest good.

Commentary

'By this,' ie., by the means of sacrifice, you should propitiate the gods who are my manifestations and have Me as their inner-Self — Sri Krishna will declare later on: —'For I am the only enjoyer and the only Lord of Sacrifices' (9.24). Propitiated by sacrifices, may these gods, nourish you with food, drink and other such items which are also required for their worship. Thus, supporting each other, may you attain the highest good called Moksha (Liberation).

iṣṭān-bhogān-iha vo devā dāsyante yajñā-bhāvitāḥ |
tair-dattān apradāyaibhyo yo bhuṅkte stena eva saḥ || *12* ||

12. The gods, pleased by sacrifice, will bestow on you the enjoyments you desire. One who enjoys the bounty of the gods without offering them anything in return, is verily a thief.

Commentary

'Theft' is defined as taking what belongs to another as one's own and using it for oneself when it is really intended for the use of another.

yajñā-śiṣṭāśinaḥ santo mucyante sarva kilbiṣaiḥ |
bhuñjate te tvaghaṃ pāpā ye pacantyātma kāraṇāt || *13* ||

13 The righteous who eat the remnants of sacrifices are freed from all sins. But the sinful ones who cook only for their own sake eat only sin.

Commentary

Those who acquire articles of food solely for propitiating the Supreme Being abiding as the Self of Indra and all other devas, and who, cooks and offers them to the Supreme Being, and then sustains themselves on the remnants of such offerings — they alone will be free of all [mental] impurities which have resulted from beginingless Karma and which obstruct the direct vision of the ātman. But the evil-minded ones, appropriate for personal use the things which the Supreme Being has granted them for devotional service, and use it all for self gratification alone — they verily eat only sin. The error here referred to is the accruing negative result of the actions.

Sri Krishna again points out that everything has its origin in sacrifice; according to both the worldly and the Scriptural views; the performance of the sacrifices is therefore necessary and their non-performance is a failing:

annād-bhavanti būtāni parjanyād-anna-saṃbhavaḥ |
yajñānād-bhavati parjanyaḥ yajñāḥ karma samud-bhavaḥ || *14* ||

14. From food arise all beings; from rain food is produced; from sacrifice comes rain; and sacrifice is achieved through activity.

Commentary

All beings have their existence in nourishment, from rain food is produced. These two facts are matters of common experience — 'From sacrifice comes rain' this is known from the Scriptural passages such as;—

'The oblations offered in fire reach the sun, and from the sun comes rain' (Manu, 3.76),

— and sacrifice consists of activities such as collecting of the materials, and other similar actions by the sacrificer.

karma brahmod-bhavaṃ viddhi brahmākṣara samudbhavam |
tasmāt sarva-gataṃ brahma nityaṃ yajñe pratiṣṭhitam || 15 ||

15. Know that activity springs from Brahman and Brahman arises from the imperishable (Self); therefore the all-pervading 'Brahman' is ever established in sacrifice.

Commentary

Activity arises from 'Brahman', — Brahman here refers to the natural physical body born of Prakrti and consisting of modifications of Prakrti. The term 'Brahman' here denotes Prakrti as in the Scriptural text;—

'From Him arises, this Brahman and this 'Brahman' becomes name, form and food' (Mun. Up., 1.1.9).

In the Gita also it will be taught by Sri Krishna that:—

'This great 'Brahman' is my 'womb' (14.3)

Therefore, the phrase 'Activity arises from Brahman' is interpreted as activity being produced by the physical body which is comprised of the modifications of Prakrti. "The 'Brahman' arises from the imperishable Self" — in this context the term 'imperishable' indicates the Jīva [individual Self]. The physical body, which is tenanted by the Self and is nourished by food and drink, is designed for action; hence the physical body which constitutes the instrument of activity is said to arise from the imperishable. Therefore the 'all-pervading Brahman' means, in this context, the bodies of all persons of diverse natures which are the products of Prakrti of which all material entities are comprised, and is hence all-pervading. The meaning is that the bodies owe their existence to this process of sacrifice.

evaṃ pravartitaṃ cakraṃ nānu vartayatīha yaḥ |
aghāyur-indriyā rāmo moghaṃ pārtha sa jīvati || 16 ||

16. One who does not follow this cycle thus set in motion, lives in error, revelling in the senses, he lives in vain O Arjuna.

Commentary

Thus, this cycle is set in motion by the Supreme Being. From food originate embodied Jīvas which are denoted by the word 'beings'; from rain food is produced; from sacrifice comes rain; sacrifice is achieved by activities which are accomplished by an agent; and activity arises from the embodied Self; and again the body is endowed with life from food. In this manner there is a sequence. which revolves like a wheel through the mutual relation of cause and effect.

Hence, if one who is engaged in spiritual practice — whether qualified for Karma Yoga or Jñāna Yoga — does not keep in motion this wheel which revolves in a cycle through mutual relation of cause and effect— that person, by not maintaining his physical being by means of the remnants of sacrifice, lives in error. The senses become the pleasure -gardens of one whose mind and body are not nourished by the 'remnants of sacrifices.' Rajas and Tamas begin to preponderate. Being thus deflected from Self-realisation, he rejoices only in sense-gratification. Therefore, even if he were to strive for Self-realisation, it would be fruitless. So therefore his life is wasted, O Arjuna.

Sri Krishna now says that the performance of the 'Five Great Sacrifices' etc., according to social status and stage of life, should only be renounced by one who is liberated — whose vision of the ātman does not depend on any external means.

yastvātma-ratir-eva syād-ātma tṛptaśca mānavaḥ ǀ
ātmanyeva ca santuṣṭas-tasya kāryaṃ na vidyate ǀǀ *17* ǀǀ

17. But the person whose delight is only in the Self, who is satisfied with the Self, who rejoices in the Self, for him nothing remains to be accomplished.

Commentary

But for one, who is not in need of the means of Jñāna Yoga or Karma Yoga, who has a natural predisposition to achieve Self-realisation, who is satisfied by the Self alone and not by food, drink and other things which are distinct from the Self, who rejoices in the Self alone and not in pleasure gardens, garlands, sandal paste, vocal and instrumental music etc., and for whom everything is the Self alone — his subsistence, nourishment and enjoyment, — for him no activity remains to be done in order to achieve Self-realisation, because he is spontaneously and continuously aware of the essential nature of the Self.

naiva tasya kṛtenārtho nākṛteneha kaścana ǀ
na cāsya sarva-bhūteṣu kaścid artha vyapāśrayaḥ ǀǀ *18* ǀǀ

18. For him there is no interest in what is done or what is left undone, nor has he to rely on any being for anything whatsoever.

Commentary

Thus, for such an individual there is nothing to be gained from any practice undertaken for Self-realisation, nor is he subject to any fault or calamity from not undertaking such spiritual practice, because his Self-realisation does not depend on any external means — for the adoption of the means is only for achieving an aversion to Prakrti and its evolutes.

Spiritual practice for Self-realisation is only proscribed for that person whose vision of the Self is so natural that it no longer depends on any means. But Karma Yoga is a superior practice for attaining Self-realisation for the average seeker, because it is:—

(a) easy to perform,
(b) it is secure from possible error,
(c) the contemplation of the true nature of the ātman is included in it, and
(d) even for a Jñāna Yogin the performance of minimum activity is necessary.

For these reasons, Karma Yoga is better as a practice to achieve Self-realisation.

tasmād asaktaḥ satataṃ kāryaṃ karma samācara ǀ
asakto hyācaran karma param-āpnoti pūruṣaḥ ǀǀ *19* ǀǀ

19. Therefore, always perform without attachment, that work which ought to be done. For one who acts without attachment attains to the Supreme.

Commentary

Therefore, considering that all work must be done with detachment, you should act without considering yourself to be an agent — one attains the Supreme Goal by Karma Yoga itself — the meaning [of "attains to the Supreme"] is that one attains Self-realisation.

karmaṇaiva hi saṃsiddhim āsthitā janakādayaḥ ǀ
loka saṅgraham-evāpi saṃpaśyan kartum arhasi ǀǀ *20* ǀǀ

20. Verily, by Karma Yoga alone did Janaka and others reach perfection. Indeed, you should act, bearing in mind the welfare of the world.

Commentary

Even royal sages like Janaka and others, who were the foremost among the enlightened ones, preferred Karma Yoga as the means for attaining perfection.
Thus, having first declared that for an aspirant for liberation who is unsuited for Jñāna Yoga, Karma Yoga alone should be practiced, it was next convincingly taught that, even for one who is qualified for Jñāna Yoga, Karma Yoga is still the preferred means. Now it is going to be taught (in verses 20-26) that Karma Yoga must be performed in every way by anyone who is virtuous.

At least for the welfare of all beings (*loka-saṅgraha*), you should do work even if there is no need of it for yourself.

yadyad-ācarati śreṣṭhas-tat-tad-evetaro janaḥ |
sa yat pramāṇaṃ kurute lokas-tad-anuvartate || *21* ||

21. Whatever an eminent person does, other people also do, whatever standard he sets, the world follows it.

Commentary

'An eminent person,' (*śreṣṭha*) is one who is recognised for his knowledge of all the Scriptures and for his observance of all the Scriptural injunctions. Whatever he does, others who are unlearned in the Scriptures will also do, following his example. Therefore for the maintenance of the world [order], an eminent person, distinguished for being wise should always perform all [prescribed] duties according to one's station (*varna*) and stage in life (*āśrama*). Otherwise, the demerit generated from setting a bad example to the masses of the world will bring him down, even if he were established in an advanced stage of Jñāna Yoga.

na me parthāsti kartavyaṃ triṣu lokeṣu kiñcana |
nānavāptam-avāptavyaṃ varta eva ca karmaṇi || *22* ||

22. For me, O Arjuna, there is nothing in all the three worlds which ought to be done, nor is there anything lacking that ought to be acquired — yet I continually engage in action.

Commentary

For Me, who am the Lord of all, who has all desires fulfilled, who is omniscient, whose will is [unfailingly] true, and who at My own pleasure, choose to remain in the three worlds in the forms of gods, humans and such other beings, there is nothing whatever to achieve. Therefore, even though there is nothing lacking for Me i.e., nothing yet to be achieved by work, yet still I continue working for the maintenance of the world

yadi hyahaṃ varteyaṃ jātu karmaṇyatandritaḥ |
mama vartmānuvartante manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ || *23* ||

23. For if I did not continue to engage Myself in action, unwearied, O Arjuna, humankind would follow my example.

Commentary

I am the Lord of all, My sport consists in creation, sustentation and dissolution of the universe at My will, even though I incarnate at My pleasure as a human being to help the world— if I, thus incarnated in the family of Vasudeva who is the foremost among virtuous men, did not continue to act in a manner appropriate to the circumstance, untiring, at all times, then, these people with misconceptions would follow My example thinking that “the way adopted by the

son of virtuous Vasudeva alone is the real way.” Instead of attaining Self-realisation, they would go to purgatory because of the error arising from neglect of duty.

utsīdeyur-ime lokā na kuryaṃ karma ced aham |
saṅkarasya ca kartā syām upahanyām-imāḥ prajāḥ || *24* ||

24. These worlds would perish if I did not perform action; I would be the author of confusion and the cause of destruction of these beings.

Commentary

If I do not fulfill My appropriate duty, all the virtuous people would also neglect their duties by following My example, and would be lost because of this. Thus I would be the cause of chaos among all virtuous people because of My failure to conduct Myself as prescribed in the Scriptures. Therefore I would be destroying, all these people. Even so, if you, Arjuna, the foremost of the virtuous, claim the privilege of practicing Jñāna Yoga (meditation on the Self), then the pious aspirants, who are ignorant and who follow your example, without being aware of their own competency, giving up the practice of Karma Yoga will be lost. Therefore one who is regarded as learned and wise should engage in work alone.

saktāḥ karmaṇy-avidvāṃso yathā kurvanti bhārata |
kuryād-vidvāṃs-tathāsaktāś-cikīrṣu loka-saṅgraham || *25* ||

25. Just as the ignorant act with attachment their work, O Arjuna, so should the wise act without any attachment, and only for the welfare of the world.

Commentary

'The ignorant' are those people who do not know the truth about the Self; 'attached to their work' means they are inextricably bound to their actions [and their results]. Because of their incomplete grasp of the Self, they are not qualified for Jñāna Yoga — meditation on the Self. Karma Yoga should also be practiced by one who is virtuous and unattached as a result of Self-realisation, and also by one who wishes to be an example to others in virtuous conduct. Thus one should protect the world from chaos by one’s example — even though qualified for Jñāna Yoga one should practice Karma Yoga.

na buddhi-bhedaṃ janayed ajñānāṃ karma-saṅginām |
joṣayet sarva karmāṇi vidvān yuktaḥ samācaran || *26* ||

26. The wise should not confuse the minds of the ignorant who are attached to work; rather himself performing work with devotion, he should inspire others to do likewise.

Commentary

Do not confuse the neophyte aspirants by saying that there is, besides Karma Yoga, another way to Self-realisation. They are unable to practice meditation on account of their inability to understand the ātman, and their attachment to action. One should thus encourage love for all types of activity among those who do not know the complete truth.

prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ |
ahaṅkāra vimūḍhātmā kartā’ham-iti manyate || *27* ||

27. All actions are being performed in every way by the Gunas of Prakrti. One whose mind is deluded by the notion-of-individuality, thinks, 'I am the doer.'

Commentary

It is the Gunas of Prakrti — Sattva, Rajas & Tamas, that perform all their respective activities. But one whose mind is deluded by the notion-of-individuality (*Ahankāra*), thinks, 'I am the doer of all these action.' Ahankāra is defined as the mistaken identification of 'I' applied to the physical body which is not the real 'I' [*dehātma bhrama*]. Because of this mistaken identity, one who is ignorant of the real nature of the ātman thinks, 'I am the doer' with regard to the activities that are really being done by the Gunas. [Cf. 14;23]

tattva-vittu mahābāho guṇa-karma-vibhāgayoḥ |
guṇā guṇeṣu vartanta iti matvā na sajjate || *28*||

28. But he who knows the truth about the divisions of the Gunas and their functions, O mighty-armed one, through his awareness that the Gunas operate on their products, is not attached.

prakṛter-guṇa saṃmūḍhāḥ sajjante guṇa-karmasu |
tān-akṛtsna vido mandān kṛtsnavinna vicālayet || *29* ||

29. Those who are deluded by the Gunas of Prakrti are attached to the functions of the Gunas, but one of perfect knowledge should not unsettle the ignorant who do not know the whole truth.

Commentary

Those who 'do not know the whole truth' are those who are striving for Self-realisation but are deluded about the nature of the ātman, unaware, due to their involvement in Material Nature, that actions proceed from the Gunas. Inherently the Self is not the actor, agency arises due to its contact with the Gunas. An enlightened person should not, while being a practitioner of meditation, unsettle the ignorant. They tend to emulate a great person, when they see him give up Karma Yoga their minds too will be distracted from Karma Yoga. Thus the great person, should assiduously practice Karma Yoga, with complete mindfulness of the Self not being the agent. Thus, one should demonstrate that Karma Yoga by itself is an independent means for Self-realisation.

mayi sarvāṇi karmāṇi sanyasyādhyātma-cetasā |
nirāśīr-nir-mamo bhūtvā yudhyasva vigata-jvaraḥ || *30* ||

30. Dedicating all your actions to Me with a mind centred in the Self, free from desire and selfishness, free from hot-headedness, do you engage in battle.

Commentary

Perform all your prescribed duties free from desire or selfishness and devoid of fear, with a mind focussed on the ātman. Dedicate all acts to Me, the Lord of all, who constitutes the inner pervading Self of all beings. 'Adhyatma-cetas' is that mind which is focussed on the Self through awareness of the essential nature of the Self. This individual Self (Jīvātman) constitutes the "body" of the Supreme Self and is activated by Him. This is taught by Vedic texts like:—

'He who has entered within, is the ruler of all beings and is the Self of all' (Tait. Ar. 3.11)

'Him who has entered within and is the doer' (ibid 3.23.)

'He who, dwelling in the Self is within the Self, whom the Self does not know, whose body the Self is, who controls the Self from within — he is your Internal Ruler and immortal Self' (Br. Up. 3.7.22)

Smrti texts also state the same thing —

' Him who is the ruler of all' (Manu, 12.122).

Sri Krishna will teach later on:—

'And I am seated in the hearts of all; from Me are memory, knowledge and the faculty of reason' (Gita 15,15);

'The Lord, O Arjuna, lives in the heart of everything causing them to spin around and around by His power, as if set on a wheel. (Gita 18.61).

Hence, dedicate all actions to Me, the Supreme Being, considering Me to be the [ultimate] agent, by contemplating on the ātman as activated by Me alone, because it is My manifestation. And do all duties, considering them as acts of worship only; free from the desire for rewards, and therefore free from selfishness, devoid of 'hot-headedness', that is stimulation caused by passions like anger.

Contemplate that the Supreme Being the Lord of all, Principal of all, causes His own works to be done only for the purpose of having Himself worshipped by His own instruments, viz. the individual Jīvas belong to Him and are His agents. Free yourself from feverish concern originating from ideas like — 'What will become of me with an ancient, endless accumulation of karma arising from beginingless time?' Perform Karma Yoga with ease, for the Supreme Being Himself, propitiated by all acts, will free you from bondage. His Lordship and Principalship over all are verified by Vedic texts.

ye me matam idaṃ nityam anu-tiṣṭhanti mānavāḥ |
śraddhāvanto'nasūyanto mucyante te'pi karmabhiḥ || *31* ||

31. Those people who, full of faith ever practice this teaching of Mine and those who receive it without caviling — even they will be released from Karma.

Commentary

There are those persons who are qualified to understand the Shastra and decide for themselves what My doctrine is, and follow it accordingly; there are others who while having faith in the teaching of the Shastra never practice it. And there are still others who, even though they have no faith, do not cavil at it, ie., they do not find any fault in the noble Shastra. All these persons are freed from Karmas which exist from beginingless time and which cause bondage.

By the term, *api* (even) in *'te'pi karmabhih'* ('even they from Karmas……'), [indicates that] these persons are divided into three groups; in other words those who, even if they do not practice but still believe in this teaching of the Shastra and do not cavil at it, will be absolved of their sins by their faith and absence of fault-finding. For if they have faith they will, before long, take to the practice of this teaching and will attain liberation.

ye tvetad abhyasūyanto nānutiṣṭhanti me matam |
sarva jñāna vimūḍhāṃstān viddhi naṣṭān acetasaḥ || *32* ||

32. But those who carp at My teaching and those who do not practice this teaching of Mine — know them to be seriously deluded and devoid of reasoning, and therefore lost.

Commentary

The function of reason is to determine the real nature of things. When the process of reason is lacking, one's comprehension becomes warped and extremely deluded in a variety of ways.

sadṛśaṃ ceṣṭate svasyāḥ prakṛter-jñānavān api |
prakṛtiṃ yānti bhūtāni nigrahaḥ kiṃ kariṣyati || *33* ||

33. Even an enlightened person acts in conformity to his own nature; beings follow their nature; what will restraint do?

Commentary

The fundamental nature of the ātman is different from Material Nature (*Prakrti*) — this awareness must be constantly maintained. Even one who knows this, continues to act in relation to material objects according to one’s own nature; ie. guided by previously acquired subliminal activators (*samskāras*). How is this? All beings act according to their own natures. Beings conjoined with insentient matter, all act according to predispositions which have accrued from time immemorial. What effect can the restraint enjoined by Shastras have on those who simply follow their natural predispositions?

Sri Krishna expounds the process by which individuals are overpowered by their respective dispositions: —

indriyasyendriyasyārthe rāga-dveṣau vyavasthitau ।
tayor-na vaśam āgacchet tau hyasya paripanthinau ।। *34* ।।

34. Attachment and aversion for sense objects abide in the sense-organs; let none come under their sway; for they are one’s foes.

Commentary

An ineluctable link exists between sensory-organs like the ear, with their objects like sound; and for organs of action like the tongue towards their objects like tasty food. The desire to indulge in these objects is caused by pleasurable sub-conscious impressions [from previous experiences]. When indulgence in them causes pain — aversion is produced. Thus, these two, attraction and aversion distract the mind of the practitioner of meditation, and forcibly motivate one to engage in them, in spite of his having established some sort of control over the senses. So no meditator should come under the sway of attraction and aversion which bring ruin. These two are indeed unconquerable foes that detract one from the practice of meditation.

śreyān sva-dharmo viguṇaḥ para-dharmāt svanuṣṭhitāt ।
sva-dharme nidhanaṃ śreyaḥ para-dharmo bhayāvaḥ ।। *35* ।।

35. Better is one's own duty, though devoid of merit, than the duty of another well-done. Better is death in one's own duty; the duty of another is fraught with fear.

Commentary

Therefore Karma Yoga [one’s own natural duty] is better than Jñāna Yoga [the duty of another]. It is one's personal duty because it is natural and easy to perform, and even if defective, it is free from possibility of interruption and fall. Jñāna Yoga (meditation on the ātman), on the other hand, though performed well for some time, constitutes an alien duty, as it is difficult to practice for one immersed in Material Nature. It is therefore subject to interruption and the possibility of error. For a Karma Yogi — practicing his natural duty, even death without success in one birth does not matter. In the next birth, with the help of the experience already gained in this birth it will be possible to perform Karma Yoga without any impediments.

arjuna uvāca

atha kena prayukto’yaṃ pāpaṃ carati pūruṣaḥ ।
anicchann-api vārṣṇeya balādiva niyojitaḥ ।। *36* ।।

Arjuna said:
36. But, impelled by what, O Krishna, does one err even against one's own will, constrained as it were, by force?

Commentary

What is it, that drives one to commit error in the form of indulging in sense-gratification, as if being forced, even though one wishes not to indulge.

śrī bhagavan uvāca

kāma eṣa krodha eṣa rajoguṇa samudbhavaḥ |
mahāśano mahā-pāpmā viddhyenam-iha vairiṇam || 37 ||

The Blessed Lord said;
37. It is desire, it is anger, born of the Guna of Rajas; all-devouring, an impeller to sin. Know this to be the foe here.

Commentary

The insatiable desire-nature is born of the Rajas Guna arising from subliminal activators. It is an enemy who attracts one towards the objects of the senses. When desire is impeded it creates anger towards those persons [objects or circumstances] which are the cause of such hindrance. It incites the aspirant to harm others. Know this [desire] which is born of Rajas, to be the natural enemy of meditators on the Self (Jñāna Yogins).

dhūmenāvriyate vahnir-yathādarśo malena ca |
yatholbenāvṛto garbhas-tathā tenedam-āvṛtam || 38 ||

38. As a fire is enveloped by smoke, as a mirror is covered by dust, and as an embryo by the amnion, so is this (world) enveloped by that (desire).

Commentary

The force of the desire-nature covers all beings like fire covered by smoke, as a mirror by dirt and a foetus by a sac.

āvṛtaṃ jñānam etena jñānino nitya vairiṇā |
kāma-rūpeṇa kaunteya duṣpūreṇānalena ca || 39 ||

39. Wisdom is obscured by this constant enemy of the wise, O Arjuna, in the form of desire, which is as insatiable as fire.

Commentary

The embodied ātman's fundamental attribute is consciousness, but insight is concealed by this perpetual enemy — desire, which causes attachment to sense-objects. Desire is difficult to gratify, its objects are unworthy of attainment and it is insatiable, ie., can never be satisfied.

indriyāṇi mano buddhir-asyādhiṣṭhānam-ucyate |
etair-vimohayaty-eṣa jñānam-āvṛtya dehinam || 40 ||

40. The senses, the mind and the intellect are said to be its accessories. By these it [desire] deludes the embodied Self by concealing its wisdom.

Commentary

By means of the senses, the mind and the intellect, which have been reduced to the position of servants through attachment to sense objects, desire deludes the embodied Self caught up in Material Nature by obscuring it's comprehension. Desire deludes one through manifold illusions, by turning one away from the awareness of the true nature of the ātman and making one indulge in sense gratification.

tasmāt-tvam-indriyāṇyādau niyamya bharatarṣabha |
pāpmānaṃ prajahi hyenaṃ jñāna vijñāna nāśanam || 41 ||

41. Therefore, O Arjuna, controlling the senses first, slay this deluding thing [desire] that destroys both knowledge and discrimination.

Commentary

Thus, you too, being immersed in Material Nature and shackled to sense-activities, should at the very commencement of the journey to Liberation, control the senses by the practice of Karma Yoga, and then, you must vanquish this deluding enemy in the form of desire which destroys wisdom relating to the true nature of the ātman and the discrimination, which is the means to gain this wisdom.

Sri Krishna speaks of that which is the most important of the adversaries: —

indriyāṇi parāṅyāhur-indrebhyaḥ paraṃ manaḥ |
manas-astu parā buddhir-yo buddheḥ paratas-tu saḥ || *42* ||

42. It is said that the senses are supreme: the mind is superior to the senses; the intellect is higher than the mind; but what is greater than intellect is that (the desire-nature).

Commentary

The senses are called the supreme obstacles to enlightenment, because when the senses continue operating on their objects, the pure vision of the Self cannot arise.

'The mind is superior to the senses' — even if the senses are withdrawn [from their objects], if the Manas (mind) ruminates on sense objects, pure vision of the Self cannot arise.

'The intellect (Buddhi) is higher than the mind', ie., even if the mind is indifferent to sense objects, a perverted decision by the intellect can obstruct the dawn of Self-realisation. But even if all of these up to the intellect are quietened from their activity, still, when the desire-nature, identified with volition originating from Rajas, is operating, it will by itself, obstruct Self-realisation by inducing the senses to operate in their fields. Thus it is said here; what is greater than the intellect is the desire-nature.

evaṃ buddheḥ paraṃ buddhvā saṃstabhyātmānam ātmanā |
jahi śatruṃ mahā-bāho kāma-rūpaṃ durāsadam || *43* ||

43. Thus, knowing that which is greater than the intellect and fixing the mind with the help of the intellect in Karma Yoga, O Arjuna, slay this enemy in the form of desire, which is difficult to overcome.

hariḥ oṃ tatsat
iti śrīmad bhagavadgītāsupaniṣatsu
brahmavidyāyāṃ yogaśāstre
śrīkṛṣṇārjuna saṃvāde karmayoga nama
tṛtīyodhyāyaḥ

Thus in the Upanishad of the Glorious Bhagavad Gita
The science of the Eternal, the Scripture of Yoga
The dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna
Ends the third discourse entitled
"The Yoga of Action"

Chapter 4

Jñāna Vibhāga Yogaḥ

Communion through Wisdom

Summary of the Teaching

In the third chapter it was determined that for the spiritual aspirant in whom the physical impulses are strong, the practice of Karma Yoga alone is the recommended practice. People are not naturally capable of the practice of Jñana Yoga; and even if capable, the practice of Karma Yoga alone, preceded by contemplation on the ātman as a non-agent is preferable. It has also been taught that even a person who is distinguished for wisdom (and is expected to act as a role-model for others) should still practice Karma Yoga alone.

Now in the fourth chapter the need for practising Karma Yoga is further stressed because it was taught at the very beginning of the present (*Kalpa*) age[1] of Manu for the liberation of all beings. It is also demonstrated that the science of the Self is included in it. Furthermore, the nature of Karma Yoga with its divisions and the pre-eminence of the wisdom factor in it, is taught. And incidentally the truth about the incarnations of the Lord is also mentioned.

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

imaṃ vivasvate yogaṃ proktavān aham avyayam |
vivasvān manave prāha manur-ikṣvākave'bravīt || *1* ||

The Blessed Lord said:
1. I taught this imperishable Yoga to Vivasvan; Vivasvan taught it to Manu; Manu declared it to Ikshvaku.

evaṃ paramparā prāptam imaṃ rāja-ṛṣayo viduḥ |
sa kāleneha mahatā yogo naṣṭaḥ parantapa || *2* ||

Thus handed down in succession, the royal sages knew this (Karma Yoga). But with long lapses of time, O Arjuna, this Yoga was lost to the world.

Commentary

"Don't imagine that I have just invented this teaching of Karma Yoga merely as a device for stirring up your enthusiasm for war. I Myself taught this Yoga to Vivasvān[2] at the commencement of the present age of Manu as a means for all beings to attain the highest goal of existence which is Liberation from the cycle of births and deaths. The royal sages of old learned this Yoga which had been transmitted by tradition from one generation to the other. Because of the long lapse of time and because of the dullness of the intellect of those who heard it, it has almost been lost."

sa evāyaṃ mayā te'dya yogaḥ proktaḥ purātanaḥ |
bhakto'si me sakhā ceti rahasyaṃ hyetad-uttamam || *3* ||

3. It is that same ancient Yoga which I now teach to you, as you are My devotee and My friend; it is indeed the highest mystery.

Commentary

"I now teach it to you, because you have sought refuge in Me with your whole being. It is being taught to you fully with all its supplementary parts. It is the most mysterious knowledge taught in the Vedanta, therefore it cannot be fully understood or explained by anyone other than Myself."

In this connection (of confirming the authenticity of the teaching), Arjuna inquires about the truth of Lord's Incarnation.

arjuna uvāca

aparaṃ bhavato janma paraṃ janma vivasvataḥ |
katham etad vijānīyāṃ tvam ādau proktavān iti || 4 ||

Arjuna said:
4. Your birth was recent, and the birth of Vivasvan long ago. How then am I to understand that you taught it in the beginning?

Commentary

According to the regular calculation of time, Krishna's birth was indeed later, contemporaneous with Arjuna's. And the birth of Vivasvān was at an earlier aeon, reckoned as twenty-eight cycles of units of four Yugas each [3] . How can Arjuna accept the truth of His statement that He taught it in the beginning?

Now, there is no contradiction here, for it was quite possible that Sri Krishna had taught Vivasvān in a former birth. The memory of what was done in former births is quite natural for highly evolved persons. This should not be taken to mean that Arjuna does not know that the son of Vasudeva, the speaker, is the Lord of all, because he says later on: —

> 'You are the Supreme Brahman, the Supreme Light and the. Supreme Purifier. All the seers proclaim You as the eternal Divine Puruṣa, the Primal Lord, unborn and all-pervading So also proclaim the divine sage Nārada, Asita, Devala and Vyāsa. You Yourself also are saying this to me' (10.12-13)

Arjuna had heard repeatedly from Bhīṣma and others during Yudhiṣṭhira's Rājasūya sacrifice [4] that—

> 'Krishna alone is the cause of creation and submergence of all the worlds This universe, consisting of things both animate and inanimate, was created for the sake of Krishna (Ma Bha, 2:38;43;23).

'For the sake of Krishna' means that the entire universe is subservient to, and dependant for its existence on Krishna.

This apparent contradiction may be resolved as follows; — Arjuna surely knows that Krishna the son of Vasudeva is the Supreme Being. Though knowing Him as such, he questions as if he did not know Him. The reasoning was this; the Lord of all is absolutely pure and totally auspicious and omniscient, His resolve is perfect and His desires fulfilled — can the birth of such a Being be of the same nature as that of the gods, humans etc., who are subject to Karma? Or is it false like the illusions of a magical show? Or could it be real? If His birth is real, what is the manner of His birth? What is His body composed of? What is the cause of His birth? What is the purpose of the Incarnation ?

The way in which Sri Krishna answers Arjuna's question, justifies the construing of the question in this way.

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

bahūni me vyatītāni janmāni tava cārjuna |
tānyahaṃ veda sarvāṇi na tvaṃ vettha parantapa || 5 ||

The Blessed Lord said:
5. Many births of Mine have passed, O Arjuna, and so is it with you also. I know them all, but you do not know them.

Commentary

By this, the reality of the Lord's birth is confirmed — 'Many births of Mine have passed' — then is added the statement; 'so is it with you' to illustrate that the nature of both births are equally real.

ajo'pi sann-avyayātmā bhūtānām īśvaro'pi san |
prakṛtiṃ svām-adhiṣṭhāya saṃbhavāmy-ātma māyayā || 6 ||

6. Though I am unborn and immutable by nature, and though I am the Lord of all beings, yet by employing My own Nature (Prakrti) I am born by My own free will.

Commentary

Without compromising any of the My specific qualities, such as supreme Lordship, birthlessness, imperishability etc, I am manifest by My own free will — *'Prakṛti'* means one's own nature. The meaning is that while abiding in My own Nature and taking a form of My choice, I incarnate by My own free will (*Māyā*).

Ramanuja states in his introduction to the Commentary that he supports the absolute reality of the Divine Incarnations. He now goes to some lengths to refute the doctrine of the Advaitins that the Incarnations of the Lord are not real but are only illusions — for the detailed discussion please see appendix.

Sri Krishna now specifies the cause of His incarnations.

yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānir-bhavati bhārata |
abhyutthānam-adharmasya tadā'tmānaṃ sṛjāmy-aham || 7 ||

7. Whenever there is a decline of Dharma, O Arjuna, and an increase of Adharma, then I incarnate Myself.

Commentary

There is no restriction as to the time of My birth. Whenever the observance of the Vedic Dharma ordained for the four social categories [intelligentsia, executives, entrepreneurs and workers] according to the four stages of life [student, householder, retiree, renunciate] declines, and its opposite — unrighteousness (Adharma) increases, then I Myself, willingly and in the manner previously stated, incarnate Myself.

paritrāṇāya sādhūnāṃ vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām |
dharma saṃsthāpan-ārthāya saṃbhavāmi yuge yuge || 8 ||

8. For the protection of the good and for the destruction of the wicked, for the establishment of Dharma, I advent myself from age to age.

Commentary

The 'good' are those who follow the [Vedic] Dharma, as defined above. They are the foremost among the Vaiṣṇavas, who have taken refuge in Me. While My name, pastimes and form are beyond the scope of speech and thought, these devotees cannot support or sustain themselves without My beatific vision. They regard even a moment of separation from Me as a thousand aeons. They become physically and

psychologically dejected because of their separation from Me. So I take birth from age to age in the forms of gods, humans etc., in order to cherish them by giving them the opportunity to see Me and to experience My pastimes and to converse with Me. I take birth also for the destruction of those who are hostile to such devotees and also for the restoration of the declining Vedic Dharma, which consists of devotion to Me.

The main purpose of the incarnation is to reveal the adorable [divine] form in order to foster devotion. The destruction of the wicked is the secondary purpose only. There is no specific restrictions of Yugas like Kṛta, Treta etc., for the appearance of Divine Incarnations.

janma karma ca me divyam evaṃ yo vetti tattvataḥ |
tyaktvā dehaṃ punar-janma naiti māmeti so'rjuna || 9 ||

9. Whosoever thus knows in truth My divine birth and deeds O Arjuna, is not reborn again, and after leaving the body comes to Me.

Commentary

I am [in fact] devoid of birth, because My 'birth' is unlike that of ordinary beings whose births are conditioned by Karma in association with Material Nature and whose actions produce the evil of bondage. By a true understanding of My divine appearance and deeds, all one's karmic obstacles that hinder the taking of refuge in Me are absolved. In this birth itself, resorting to Me in the manner already described, and loving Me and contemplating on Me alone, one reaches Me.

vīta rāga-bhaya-krodhā man mayā mām upāśritāḥ |
bahavo jñāna tapasā pūtā mad-bhāvam āgatāḥ || 10 ||

10. Freed from desire, fear and anger, absorbed in Me, taking refuge in Me, purified by the austerity of knowledge, many have attained My state.

Commentary

"Purified by the austerity called of knowledge" — refers to the truth relating to Krishna's manifestation and deeds, many have become transformed in the manner described above. The Veda validates this statement: —

'The wise know well the manner in which He is born' (Taitt. Arany., 3131)

ye yathā māṃ prapadyante tāṃs-tathaiva bhajāmy-aham |
mama vartmānuvartante manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ || 11 ||

11. Whosoever takes refuge in Me in any manner whatsoever, in the same manner do I favour them; beings experience Me alone in different ways, O Arjuna.

Commentary

In whatever manner seekers of refuge think of Me, according to their natural dispositions and surrender to Me — I favour them by revealing Myself to them in the form of their choice. Why elaborate more here? All those who are intent on attaining Me will certainly experience Me, with their own eyes and other sense organs in every way they may desire. The sincere spiritual aspirants will certainly experience an epiphany, that is, my essential nature however indescribable and inconceivable by the Yogins it may be.

Now after completing the digression (regarding the divine incarnations), in order to teach the mode in which Karma Yoga itself acquires the form of *Jñāna* (Wisdom/meditation), Sri Krishna first described the difficulty in finding persons who are qualified for Karma Yoga of this type.

kāṅkṣantaḥ karmaṇāṃ siddhiṃ yajanta iha devatāḥ |
kṣipraṃ hi mānuṣe loke siddhir-bhavati karmajā || *12* ||

12. Those who hanker for success in action in this world, sacrifice to the gods; for in this human world, success is quickly attained by religious rites

Commentary

"Nobody worships Me without having some motivation for rewards — I am the Self of Indra and other devas and the real recipient of all offerings. Why is this? Because in this mortal world, results in the form of sons, cattle, food etc., are quickly acquired from the performance of sacrificial rites. The phrase, *'mānuṣe loke'* (the world of humans) implies heaven and the other worlds also. All worldly people lack discrimination because of their ceaseless accumulation of demerit amassed from time immemorial. They expect rapid results and perform only those rituals which consist of the propitiation of Indra and other devas for the sake of sons, cattle, food etc., and for the sake heaven and such [realms of enjoyment]. But none being distressed by Samsāra, and aspiring for final Liberation, undertakes the practice of Karma Yoga of the kind described above. Real Karma Yoga is devotional service directed to Me."

Sri Krishna now indicates the cause which annuls the demerit hindering the undertaking of Karma Yoga.

cātur-varṇyaṃ mayā sṛṣṭaṃ guṇa karma vibhāgaśaḥ |
tasya kartāram api māṃ viddhy-akartāram avyayam || *13* ||

13. The [social] system of four castes was generated by Me according to division of Gunas and Karma. Though I am the generator, know Me as a non-agent and immutable.

Commentary

The whole universe from Brahma down to a clump of grass, together with the system of four social divisions divided according to the Gunas [5] and by actions like self-control in accordance with the Gunas, was projected into being by Krishna. The mention of "generation" is for illustration. It is intended also to indicate that the universe is sustained by Krishna alone and is withdrawn by Krishna alone. Krishna is the source of this manifold activity of manifestation, sustentation and destruction, but at the same time is a "non-agent."

Sri Krishna explains how this is possible.

na māṃ karmāṇi limpanti na me karma phale spṛhā |
iti māṃ yo'bhijānāti karmabhir-na sa badhyate || *14* ||

14. Actions do not taint Me, nor do I have a desire for the fruits of actions. One who understands Me thus, is not bound by karma.

Commentary

I am not subjected to Karma through these various actions like projection, sustentation and dissolution [of the universe]. For the distinctions [among sentient beings] of gods, humans, Pretas[6] and animals, are not specifically caused by Me, but by each

individual's particular Karma. Therefore, by the process of discriminating between the acquired and the inherent, it will be found that I am not the Originator of specific differences in the universe. The Jīvas (Selves) are endowed with bodies at the time of [the initial] universal projection in accordance with their own Karmas arising from attachment to results etc., In conformity with their own Karma they experience all the enjoyments available in the universe. Thus for them (the embodied Selves) alone is there desire for worldly achievements etc., and for the results of their actions, but for Me there is no such desire.

The Author of the Vedanta Sutras agrees:

'No partiality or cruelty exists in God on account of the inequalities of creation being dependant on the Karma of jivas" (Brahma Sutras., 2.1.34).

The venerable Parāśara also agrees:

'He (the Lord) is only the instrumental cause in the creation of beings. The material cause is the karma of those to be created. With the exception of the instrumental cause, the sentient being that becomes embodied does not require another cause. A [created] thing is manifest in its present condition O best of ascetics, only through its own potentiality' (V.P., 1.4.51-2).

The Supreme Being is only the operative cause with regard to the projection of beings ie., the embodied Selves of gods, humans and animals. The actual cause for the differences is the potentiality in the form of previous Karmas, of the Jivas themselves.

He who realizes Me thus, to be the agent of manifestation etc. and yet the non-agent, ie., as one who has no desire for results of the acts of creation etc. — such a person is freed from the previous Karma which hinders the undertaking of Karma Yoga by causing attachment to results — such is the purport.

evaṃ jñātvā kṛtaṃ karma pūrvair-api mumukṣubhiḥ |
kuru karmaiva tasmāt tvaṃ pūrvaiḥ pūrvataraṃ kṛtam || 15 ||

15. Having known this, the ancient seekers for liberation also performed action, therefore you also should engage in action alone, as the ancients did in days of yore.

kiṃ karma kim akarmeti kavayo'py-atra mohitāḥ |
tatte karma pravakṣyāmi yaj-jñātvā mokṣyase'śubhāt || 16 ||

16. What is action? What is inaction? Even the wise are confused in this respect. I shall declare to you that kind of action by knowing which, you will be freed from suffering.

Commentary

What is the type of action which should be done by an aspirant for liberation? And what is inaction? Realisation of the true nature of the agent [of action], is spoken of as 'inaction'. The wise, even the learned scholars, are puzzled about these two — the proper form of the actions to be performed and the true realisation that goes with it. I shall teach you that activity which also includes wisdom. Knowing, that is, practicing it, you will be released from suffering (inauspiciousness), which is the bondage of Samsara. Knowledge about the work to be performed leads to its performance.

Why is it so difficult to understand this Karma? Sri Krishna explains:

karmaṇo hyapi boddhavyaṃ boddhavyaṃ ca vikarmaṇaḥ |
akarmaṇaśca boddhavyaṃ gahanā karmaṇo-gatiḥ || 17 ||

17. For verily one must understand the nature of action (*karma*), and the nature of diversified action (*vikarma*) as also the nature of non-action (*akarma*) — profound indeed is the way of action.

Commentary

There is a need to understand what is meant by 'action' (*karma*) – that is action which leads to Liberation. There is also a need to understand 'diversified action' (*vikarma*) — these are actions [7] which are classified as obligatory, periodical and desiderative works requiring various accessories. One also needs to understand 'non-action' (*akarma*)— that is, the knowledge of the Self. Therefore the path of action to be pursued by the seeker after Liberation is indeed mysterious, difficult to understand.

What should be understood regarding 'diversified actions' is that the primary goal of Scriptural Teaching is Moksha alone [and not the various results said to accrue from these works]. And therefore the diversity created by the various results obtained from obligatory, occasional and desiderative rites and the acquisition of things required for their performance, etc., should be renounced.

Sri Krishna explains what must be known in regard to action and non-action:—

karmaṇya karma yaḥ paśyed akarmaṇi ca karma yaḥ |
sa buddhimān manuṣyeṣu sa yuktaḥ kṛtsna karma-kṛt || *18* ||

18. He who sees non-action in action and also action in non-action is wise among people. He is fit for liberation and has concluded all actions.

Commentary

Here by the term 'non-action', Self-realisation, which is the subject under discussion, is meant. 'He who sees non-action in action and also action in non-action,' refers to one who has attained Self-realisation while engaged in action, and who can also perceive action while engaged in non-action, ie., in the state of mindfulness of the ātman.

The purport is this: — One can perceive, by constant reflection on the true nature of the ātman, that the work being done, is in itself a form of wisdom-practice. One can also perceive that this wisdom-practice is an integral part of Karma Yoga. Both these (ie., action as the practice of wisdom and wisdom manifest in actions) are accomplished through reflection on the true nature of the ātman, even while acting. Thus, one who can see action as being included in contemplation on the ātman, is wise, — he has realised the full meaning of the Śāstras; he is worthy and fit to attain Mokṣa. He alone has concluded all actions, that is, has actualised the goal of the entire Shastric teaching.

How is wisdom practiced through works which are actually being done? Sri Krishna explains:

yasya sarve samārambhāḥ kāma saṅkalpa varjitāḥ |
jñānāgni dagdha karmāṇāṃ tam āhuḥ paṇḍitaṃ budhāḥ || *19* ||

19. He whose every undertaking is free from desire for personal gain and the delusive identification [of the body with the Self], whose karmas are burnt up in the fire of knowledge — him the wise describe as a sage.

Commentary

In the case of the seeker of liberation, the three types of actions (obligatory, periodical and desiderative), are undertaken without any desire for profit — that is, without any attachment to the results. The misconception that the Self is the body (*Prakṛti*) and its modes (*Guṇas*), is termed *kāma-saṅkalpa*, — 'delusive identification', the genuine Karma Yogi is free from such identification. The enlightened ones call one who acts in

this way and whose previous Karmas are thereby burnt up by the fire of realisation of the real nature of the Self, a rational and discriminating sage — he is a true Karma Yogi. Thus the point that wisdom is involved in true Karma Yoga, is established.

Sri Krishna elaborates this point further: —

tyaktvā karma phalā-saṅgaṃ nitya tṛpto nirāśrayaḥ |
karmaṇy-abhi-pravṛtto'pi naiva kiñcit karoti saḥ || *20* ||

20. Having renounced attachment to the fruits of one's actions, ever contented with the eternal (Self), and dependent on none, one does not verily act, even though engaged in activity.

Commentary

'dependent on none' — devoid of dependence on the transient Prakṛti (body and external environment) — such a person, even though fully engaged in activity, does not, in essence act at all. He is engaged in wisdom-practice under the form of activity.

Again, works of the nature of wisdom is examined:—

nirāśīr yatacitt-ātmā tyakta sarva parigrahaḥ |
śarīraṃ kevalaṃ karma kurvan-nāpnoti kilbiṣam || *21* ||

21. Free from expectation, with the mind controlled, relinquishing all notions of possessiveness, and merely doing physical activity, one does not incur blame.

Commentary

'Free from expectation' — means having no expectation of the rewards of actions. *"relinquishing all notions of possessiveness"* — one whose primary focus is the ātman is free from the sense of ownership in relation to Material Nature and any of its derivatives. One who is thus engaged in physical activity alone, as long as he lives, 'does not incur any blame (*kilbiṣa*)' — i.e., does not get entangled in Samsāra. He attains Self-realisation through this practice of Karma Yoga and need not resort to any exclusive practice of meditation.

yadṛcchālābha santuṣṭo dvandvātito vimatsaraḥ |
samaḥ siddhāvasiddhau ca kṛtvāpi na nibadhyate || *22* ||

22. Content with what comes without effort, transcending the pairs of opposites, free from ill-will, balanced in success and failure, though acting, one is not bound.

Commentary

Content with whatever chance (without deliberate effort) may bring for the maintenance of the body. 'Transcending the pairs of opposites' means enduring cold and heat and such other experiences of duality (such as pleasure & pain etc), until the practice of Karma Yoga has been actualised. 'Free from ill-will' means free from animosity towards other beings, recognising that one's own karma is the cause of all personal suffering [and thus there is no need to blame any one else]. 'balanced in success and failure' means maintaining mental equanimity in success like victory in war, etc., and defeat — such a person 'is not bound' that is, does not become entangled in the cycle of births and deaths (Samsara), even though practising Karma Yoga only.

gata-saṅgasya muktasya jñānāvasthita cetasaḥ |
yajñāyā-carataḥ karma samagraṃ pravilīyate || *23* ||

23. The Karma of one who is free from attachments, who is liberated, whose mind is established in wisdom, who acts only for sacrifice, is entirely dissolved.

Commentary

When a person's mind has become fixed in Self-realisation, a state of complete non-attachment to any object arises. One is therefore liberated from the concept of possession, and works only to please the Divine, in the manner described earlier — thus, the perpetual accumulation of Karma, which is the cause of bondage, is completely dissolved without leaving any residue.

This far, the nature of action as wisdom-in-action has been described being based upon a constant awareness of the true nature of the ātman as different from the body. Now Sri Krishna says that all actions together with their ancillaries, are a form of wisdom-practice because of the constant contemplation by the aspirant, on the Supreme Person who is the same as the Absolute Reality (Brahman), as being his inner Self.

brahmārpaṇaṃ brahma-havir brahm-āgnau brahmaṇā hutam |
brahmaiva tena gantavyaṃ brahma karma samādhinā || *24* ||

24. Brahman is the instrument, Brahman is the oblation; by Brahman is the oblation offered into the fire of Brahman; Brahman alone is to be reached by one who meditates on Brahman in one's works.

Commentary

The expression *'Brahma-arpanam'* (Brahman is the instrument) is adjectival to *'Brahma-havih'* (Brahman is the oblation). That, by which an offering is made, such as a ladle, is an arpana — it is called Brahman because it is an effect of Brahman and Brahman is the material cause of the universe. *'Brahma-arpanam'* therefore refers to the instrument of oblation which is Brahman. The oblation, just like the instrument with which it is offered, is also Brahman. It is offered by the agent who is Brahman into the fire of Brahman. One who is thus mindful of all acts being permeated by the Supreme Brahman or in other words as having the Supreme Brahman as its ground is the *Brahma-karma-samadhi*. One who contemplates on Brahman as the ground of all actions, reaches Brahman alone — because his own Self has the Supreme Brahman as its (Over)-Self.

The purport is that the individual Self— which is [called] 'Brahman' because of its having Brahman as its Over-Self — has to realise its own true nature. All actions performed by an aspirant for Liberation are wisdom-practice because they are associated with the awareness of the Supreme Brahman as their pervading essence. Actions done in this way are a direct means for Self-realisation without the meditation of Jñana Yoga.

Thus, Sri Krishna, after explaining how Karma takes the form of wisdom-practice, now speaks of the various kinds of Karma Yoga.

daivam-evāpare yajñāṃ yoginaḥ paryupāsate |
brahmāgnāv-apare yajñāṃ yajñenaivopa-juhvati || *25* ||

25. Some Yogins resort only to sacrificing to the gods. Others offer sacrifice into the fire of Brahman solely by means of sacrifice.

Commentary

'Others offer sacrifice into the fire of Brahman solely by means of sacrifice.' — these Yogins are devoted to the sacrifice and to the offering of oblations into the sacred fire [as duty alone].

śrotrādīn-indriyāṇy-anye saṃyamāgniṣu juhvati |
śabdādīn-viṣayān-anya indriyāgniṣu juhvati || *26* ||

26. Others offer hearing and the other senses into the fires of restraint. Others offer as oblations the objects of the senses, such as sound and the rest, into the fires of their senses.

Commentary

Some strive to perfect restraint of the sense such as hearing and the rest, that is, they avoid indulging in pleasing sense-objects. Other Yogins endeavour to prevent the attachment to sense-objects by abstaining from sense-gratification, through the discriminative process of deprecating their value and enjoyable nature.

sarvāṇ-īndriyāṇi prāṇa karmāṇi cāpare |
ātma-saṃyama yogāgnau juhvati jñāna-dīpite || *27* ||

27. Some again offer as oblation the functions of the senses and the activity of the vital energy (prāṇa) into the fire of the Yoga of restraint of the mind kindled by knowledge.

Commentary

The meaning is that some Yogins endeavour to prevent the mind from becoming attached to the functions of the senses and vital-breaths. By contemplating on the Self, they sublimate these energies and overcome even the subtle residual craving for them.

dravya yajñās-tapo yajñā yoga yajñās-tathā'pare |
svādhyāya-jñāna yajñāśca yatayaḥ saṃśita vratāḥ || *28* ||

28. Others again offer material objects, Tapas and Yoga as sacrifice, while others being self-restrained and of rigid vows offer their scriptural study and knowledge as sacrifice

Commentary

Some Karma Yogins perform sacrifice to the gods with materials honestly acquired. Some practice charity, some engage in making oblations into the sacred fire, all these perform sacrifice with material objects. Some perform the sacrifice of austerity — Tapas — by devoting themselves to vows and fasts such as Krcchra, Chandrāyana etc. Others perform the sacrifice of Yoga — here the term Yoga indicates pilgrimages to sacred sanctuaries and holy places as the context relates to aspects of Karma Yoga. Some are devoted to recitation of the Scriptures and some to learning their meaning. They are all devoted to the practice of self-control and of strict vows, ie., they are people of steady resolution.

apāne juhvati prāṇaṃ prāṇe'pānaṃ tathā'pare |
prāṇāpāna-gatī ruddhvā prāṇāyāma parāyaṇāḥ || *29* ||

29. Some sacrifice exhalation into inhalation. Similarly others sacrifice the inspiration into expiration. Some others, holding their breath sacrifice both the inspiration and expiration.

Commentary

Other Karma Yogins are devoted to the practice of breath control (*prāṇāyāma*) which has three actions — *Pūraka* (inspiration) is that [sacrifice] in which the inward breath is sacrificed into the outward breath. *Recaka* (expiration) is that in which the outward breath is sacrificed in the inward breath. *Kumbhaka* (retention of breath) is the sacrifice when the flow of both inward and outward breaths is stopped.

apare niyatāhārāḥ prāṇān prāṇeṣu juhvati |
sarve'pyete yajñā-vido yajñā kṣapita kalmaṣāḥ || *30* ||

30. Others, with regulated diet, are devoted to the practice of breath-control (prāṇāyāma). All these [yogins] know the meaning of sacrifices and through sacrifices are absolved of their transgressions.

Commentary

The clause *'regulated diet'* applies to everyone engaged in the threefold practice of breath control. All these, according to their liking and capacity are engaged in performing the various kinds of Karma Yoga beginning from the sacrifice of material objects up to breath-control. They know, and are devoted to Yajña comprised of obligatory and periodical rites preceded by the performance of the Five Great Sacrifices (*pañca-mahā-yajña*) they are absolved of their transgressions (*kalmaṣaḥ*) only because of this.

yajñā-śiṣṭāmṛta bhujo yānti brahmā sanātanam |
nāyaṃ loko'sty-ayajñāsya kuto'nyaḥ kurusattama || 31 ||

31. Those who subsist on the ambrosial remnants of sacrifice, go to the eternal Brahman. This world is not for one who makes no sacrifice, how then the other, O Kurusattama (Arjuna)?

Commentary

Those Karma Yogins who sustain their bodies only on the remains of sacrifice which is like ambrosia, will go to the eternal Brahman. 'Go to Brahman' here means attaining the realisation of the Self of which Brahman is the 'Over-Self'.

'One who makes no sacrifices,' is one who is not devoted to any obligatory and periodic rites etc., One will be unable to achieve the material goals of human existence known as right living (*Dharma*), prosperity (*Artha*) and pleasure (*Kāma*); how then can the Supreme goal — liberation (*Mokṣa*) be attained? As Mokṣa has been mentioned as the ultimate goal, the other three objectives are indicated by 'this world' that is, the material realm in which they are accomplished.

evaṃ bahu vidhā yajña vitatā brahmaṇo mukhe |
karmajān viddhi tān sarvān evaṃ jñātvā vimokṣyase || 32 ||

32. Thus many forms of sacrifices have been laid down as means of reaching Brahman. Know them all to be based on the (daily) rites. Knowing this, you shall be liberated.

Commentary

Reaching Brahman — means that they lead to the realisation of the true nature of the ātman. *Based on rites* — means resulting from periodical and obligatory rites performed day by day. *Knowing this* — observing them in the manner prescribed, you will be liberated.

It has been taught that work is a form of wisdom when done with awareness. Now Sri Krishna explains the predominance of the wisdom component in such actions.

śreyān dravyamayād yajñāj-jñāna yājñāḥ paraṅtapa |
sarvaṃ karmākhilaṃ pārtha jñāne parisamāpyate || 33 ||

33. The sacrifice of wisdom is superior to material sacrifice, O Parantapa (Arjuna), all actions and everything else culminate in wisdom.

Commentary

Karma Yoga has two aspects— awareness/wisdom and material accessories. Of these two, the component of awareness/wisdom is superior to the physical component.

Wisdom is the culmination of all ritual and of all its accessories and other things that are helpful to it. Thus wisdom alone, which is the ultimate goal is practically applied in Karma Yoga. And this wisdom being regularly practiced, contributes ultimately to Self-realisation.

tad viddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā |
upadekṣayanti te jñānaṃ jñāninas-tattva-darśinaḥ || 34 ||

34. Know that by full prostration, by extensive questioning and by service, the wise, who have realised the truth, will instruct you in [that] teaching.

Commentary

You can acquire this teaching from the enlightened ones, according to your level of competence. If you attend on them through full prostration and by extensive questioning and by serving them, they will explain it to you. The wise are those who have direct realisation of the true nature of the ātman. Having been honoured by you through prostration etc., and by observing your disposition characterised by a sincere desire for learning which you have demonstrated by your questions, they will instruct you in this doctrine.

Sri Krishna now speaks of the characteristics of direct and empirical Self-realisation.

yaj-jñātvā na punar-moham eva yāsyasi pāṇḍava |
yena bhūtāny-aśeṣeṇa drakṣyasy-ātman-yatho mayi || 35 ||

35. Knowing that, O Pandava (Arjuna), you will not again become deluded thus — by that knowledge you will see all beings, without exception in your Self and then in Me.

Commentary

Having the knowledge [taught previously], you will not again fall into this delusion of mistaking the body for the Self, which is the cause of possessiveness and the concept of agency. By that knowledge you will see in yourself all the beings which appear in diverse forms such as gods, humans, animals and vegetables — because you and all other beings are equal in terms of essential being — when freed from the hold of Prakrti. The essential nature of your own ātman and all other ātmans is comprised of consciousness.

And then you will see all beings in Me without any exception, because of the equality in respect of the essential nature of all Selves in their pure state, with one another and with Me.

Thus the identity of the individual Selves, when devoid of name and form, with the Supreme Self, is known from the texts like Muṇḍukya. Upaniṣad

Therefore all Selves dissociated from Prakṛti are equal in nature to one another and equal in nature to the Supreme Lord of the Universe.

api ced-asi pāpebhyaḥ sarvebhyaḥ pāpa-kṛtamaḥ |
sarvaṃ jñāna plavenaiva vṛjinaṃ santariṣyasi || 36 ||

36. Even if you are the most culpable of all criminals, you will cross over all wrong-doing by the raft of knowledge alone.

Commentary

'with the raft of the knowledge' concerning the true nature of the ātman.

yathaidhāṃsi samiddho'gnir-bhasmāt kurute'rjuna |
jñānāgniḥ sarva karmāṇi bhasmasāt kurute yathā || 37 ||

37. Just as blazing fire turns fuel to ashes, O Arjuna, so does the fire of knowledge turn all Karma to ashes.

na hi jñānena sadṛśaṃ pavitram iha vidyate |
tat-svayaṃ yoga saṃsiddhiḥ kālenātmani vindati || 38 ||

38. Verily, there is no purifier in this world equal to knowledge; one that is perfected in Karma Yoga discovers this (knowledge) spontaneously, in oneself in due time.

Commentary

Knowledge = Self-realisation, for the knowledge of the ātman destroys all evil. When one has reached perfection by the constant practice of Karma Yoga with awareness, in the manner previously taught, in due course, the wisdom concerning the ātman arises spontaneously.

Sri Krishna expounds the same idea more lucidly thus: —

śraddhāvāllabhate jñānaṃ tatparaḥ saṃyatendriyaḥ |
jñānaṃ labdhvā parāṃ śāntim acireṇādhigacchati || 39 ||

39. One who has faith, who is dedicated to it, and who has controlled the senses, attains enlightenment. Having attained enlightenment, one obtains Supreme Peace.

Commentary

After attaining knowledge through instruction in the manner described, one must develop firm faith in it, and the possibility of its actualisation in enlightenment. One who is dedicated to it — the mind must be focused thereupon. One must control the senses and restrain them from all their objects — soon, one will then reach the aforesaid state of maturity and obtain enlightenment, and thereafter will reach Supreme Peace, ie., the supreme Nirvana (beatitude).

ajñāś-cāśraddhānaśca saṃśayātmā vinaśyati |
nāyaṃ loko'sti na paro na sukhaṃ saṃśayātmanaḥ || 40 ||

40. The ignorant, the faithless and the cynic perish; for the cynic there is neither this world, nor that beyond, nor happiness.

Commentary

'The ignorant' is one that has not received knowledge through instruction, *'the faithless'* is one who does not develop any faith in this teaching i.e., who does not strive for immediate improvement, and *'the cynic'* is one who is full of scepticism in regard to the teaching — such persons perish, they are lost. When this teaching about the real nature of the Self is treated with scepticism, then one fails in this material world as also the spiritual world. The meaning is that the goals of human endeavour, such as *Dharma* (right living), *Artha* (prosperity) and *Kāma* (pleasure) which constitute the material goals or aims of life [in this world], are not fully achieved by such a cynic. How then can the Supreme Goal — *Moksha* (liberation) be achieved by him? For all the goals of life can be achieved by doing the works which are prescribed by the Shastras, but their correct performance requires the firm conviction that the Self is different from the body. Therefore, even a little happiness cannot be achieved by one who has doubts concerning the true nature of the Self.

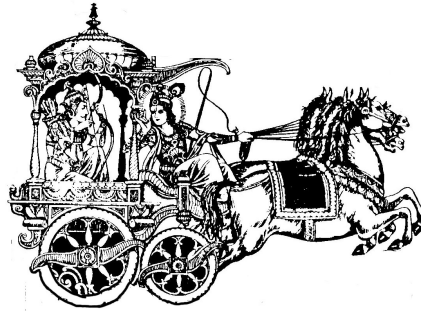
yoga-saṃnyasta karmāṇaṃ jñāna saṃcchinna saṃśayam |
ātmavantaṃ na karmāṇi nibadhnanti dhanañjaya || 41 ||

41. O Dhananjaya (Arjuna), actions do not bind one who has renounce them through Karma Yoga and whose doubts are dispelled by knowledge, and who therefore possesses a steady mind.

tasmād-ajñāna saṃbhūtaṃ hṛtsthaṃ jñānāsinātmanaḥ |
cchittvainaṃ saṃśayaṃ yogam-ātiṣṭhottiṣṭha bhārata || 42 ||

42. Therefore, with the sword of knowledge, cut asunder this doubt present in your heart, arising from ignorance concerning the Self. Arise and practice this [Karma] Yoga, O Bharata (Arjuna).

hariḥ oṃ tatsat
iti śrīmad bhagavadgītāsupaniṣatsu
brahmavidyāyāṃ yogaśāstre śrīkṛṣṇārjuna saṃvāde
jñāna-vibhāga yoga nāma
caturtho'dhyāyaḥ

Thus in the Upanishad of the Glorious Bhagavad Gita
The science of the Eternal, the Scripture of Yoga
The dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna
Ends the fourth discourse entitled
Communion through Wisdom

Chapter 5

Karma Sanyāsa Yogaḥ

Communion through Renunciation

Summary of the Teaching

In the third Chapter it was taught that even one who qualifies for Wisdom Yoga, should rather practice Action Yoga because it includes Self-awareness and in addition, it is free from liability to lapses. It is therefore easier to practice as well as being an independent means. In the fourth chapter, the wisdom aspect of Action Yoga, and its importance has been discussed. Now, it will be shown that Action Yoga is a far quicker means of attaining Self-realization than Wisdom Yoga. Thereafter the method of contemplating upon the Self as a non-agent which is a feature of Action Yoga is described. This knowledge founded in Action Yoga is then investigated.

arjuna uvāca

saṃnyāsaṃ karmaṇāṃ kṛṣṇa punar-yogaṃ ca śaṃsasi ǀ
yac-chreya etayor-ekaṃ tan-me brūhi suniścitam ǀǀ *1* ǀǀ

Arjuna said:
1. You commend, O Krishna, the renunciation of actions and then again commend Karma Yoga. Tell me conclusively that which is the better of the two.

Commentary

The objection raised [by Arjuna] is this:— "in the second chapter, you said that Action Yoga alone should be practiced first, by one aspiring for liberation, and that the vision of the ātman should be achieved through meditation after the mind has been purified by Action Yoga. Again, in the third and fourth chapters, you praised Action Yoga as being better than Meditation (Wisdom Yoga) even for one who has attained the level of competency for meditation. And that, as a means of attaining the Self, Action Yoga is independent of Wisdom Yoga. Therefore, of these two, Wisdom Yoga and Action Yoga — tell me precisely which single method is superior, and easier to practice, and quicker to confer Self-realization."

śrī bhagavān uvāca

saṃnyāsaḥ karma yogaśca niḥśreyasakarāv-ubhau ǀ
tayos-tu karma saṃnyāsāt karma-yogo viśiṣyate ǀǀ 2 ǀǀ

The Blessed Lord said:
2. Renunciation of actions and Karma Yoga, both lead to the highest beatitude. But, of these two, Karma Yoga is superior to the renunciation of actions.

jñeyaḥ sa nitya saṃnyāsī yo na dveṣṭi na kāṅkṣati ǀ
nir-dvandvo hi mahābāho sukhaṃ bandhāt-pramucyate ǀǀ *3* ǀǀ

3. One who neither resents nor desires is to be known as a perpetual renunciate: verily one who is free from the pairs of opposites is easily liberated from bondage, O Mighty-Armed (Arjuna).

Commentary

The Karma Yogi, who, being satisfied with the realization of the Self, does not desire

anything else and consequently does not resent anything; therefore, stoically endures the effects of the pairs of opposites — he should be understood as fully renounced — even established in Wisdom Yoga. Such a person therefore, is freed from bondage because of attaining perfection in Action Yoga which is easy to practice.

Wisdom Yoga and Action Yoga are now taught as being independent of each other as means for attainment of Self-realization.

sāṅkhya-yogau pṛthag-bālāḥ pravadanti na paṇḍitāḥ |
ekam-apy-āsthitaḥ samyag-ubhayor-vindate phalam || *4* ||

4. Children, not the learned, speak of Sankhya (Jñana Yoga) and Yoga (Karma Yoga) as distinct; one who is firmly established in either, attains the fruit of both.

Commentary

Those who say that Karma Yoga and Jñana Yoga are dissimilar because of the differing results, are children i.e. they lack insight — they do not know the entire truth. On the contrary — both of these paths lead to Self-realization, therefore one who is firmly established in one wins the fruit common to both of them.

yat-sāṅkhyaiḥ prāpyate sthānaṃ tad-yogair-api gamyate |
ekaṃ sāṅkhyaṃ ca yogaṃ ca yaḥ paśyati sa paśyati || *5* ||

5. That state which is attained by the Sankhyans [Jñana Yogis], is also attained by the Yogins, [Karma Yogins]. He alone is wise who sees that the Sankhya and the Yoga are really one.

saṃnyāsas-tu mahābāho duḥkham-āptum-ayogataḥ |
yoga-yukto munir -brahma na cireṇādhigacchati || *6* ||

6. But renunciation, O Mighty-Armed, is hard to achieve without [Karma] Yoga. The contemplating sage who follows [Karma] Yoga reaches Brahman (the Self or ātman) soon.

Commentary

Jñana Yoga — Renunciation, cannot be achieved without *Karma Yoga* — Action. A person practicing Karma Yoga, being a Muni (one mindful of the Self) easily attains the Brahman (Self) in a short time. But one following Jñana Yoga alone, attains the goal with great difficulty — after a long time.

yoga-yukto viśuddh-ātmā vijitātmā jitendriyaḥ |
sarva-bhūtātmā bhūtātmā kurvann-api na lipyate || *7* ||

7. One who is devoted to the path of Action and is pure of mind, who is self-control, has conquered the senses and has realized identity with all beings, even while acting, remains untainted.

Commentary

A Karma Yogi remains engaged in the performance of pure actions prescribed by the Shastras, which are done as service to the Supreme Being. By doing this, one becomes mentally pure and is able to control the mind easily. Because the mind is engaged in the performance of virtuous actions the senses are easily subdued. Once one realizes the true nature of the ātman, one finds a common identity with all beings such as gods, humans and animals etc. One who contemplates on the true nature of the ātman understands that all ātmans are of the same essence. The differences between sentient beings do not pertain to the essential nature of the ātman, because those distinctions are based on particular modifications of Material Nature (Prakrti) which constitute their physical circumstances.

The gist of this is that when dissociated from the physical body, the ātman is of the same essence in all beings; gods, humans and animals. It is of the same form of consciousness. One who has attained enlightenment, active though he may be, is not tainted [by karma] on account of erroneously identifying the body as the Self.

naiva kiñcit karomīti yukto manyeta tattva-vit |
paśyaṅ-śṛṇvan spṛśan jighrann-aśnan gacchan svapaṅ-śvasan || *8* ||

8. "I do nothing at all" — this would be the attitude of a focussed knower of the truth, even while seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, moving, sleeping, breathing;

pralapan visṛjan gṛhṇann-unimiṣan nimiṣann-api |
indriyāṇīndriyārtheṣu vartanta iti dhārayan || *9* ||

9. Speaking, releasing, grasping, opening, closing the eyes etc., always aware that the senses operate among sense-objects.

Commentary

Thus, one who is Self-realised should reflect that all the sensory organs (Jñanendriyas) as also organs of action (Karmendriyas) and the vital energies (the Prāṇas) are merely occupied automatically with their own respective objects. One should therefore think:— 'I do nothing at all' — 'My essential nature is pure consciousness'. The sense of agency arises because of the association of the Self with the senses and the Prāṇas which originate from one's Karma — it does not arise from one's essential nature."

brahmaṇyādāya karmāṇi saṅgaṃ tyaktvā karoti yaḥ |
lipyate na sa pāpena padma-patram ivāmbhasā || *10* ||

10. One who acts without attachment, reposing all action on Brahman (Nature), is not tainted by unskillful deeds, as a lotus leaf by water.

Commentary

Here the term Brahman denotes Material Nature (Prakrti), because later on Krishna will say:— 'The great Brahman is My womb' (14.3). Prakrti acts through the senses which are its particular modifications, therefore one who understands that all actions arise from Brahman (Prakrti), renounces all attachment while engaging in every action — such a person, though being in contact with Material Nature (Prakrti), is not contaminated by karma which is dependant upon the erroneous identification of the Self with the body (Prakrti) and this {identification] is the cause of bondage. Just as a lotus leaf is not dampened by water, unskilful actions do not affect or defile one with negative karma, if one is free from such identification with the body.

kāyena manasā buddhyā kevalair-indriyair-api |
yoginaḥ karma kurvanti saṅgaṃ tyaktvā'tma śuddhaye || *11* ||

11. By means of the body, the mind, the intellect and the senses, do Yogins, renouncing attachment perform actions — merely for self- purification.

Commentary

Giving up attachment to heaven etc., Yoga practitioners perform such actions through means of the body, mind and the intellect for purifying themselves, that is, for annulling the bonds of previously accumulated Karma which has affected the Self by way of obscuring its true nature and entangling it in Samsara.

yuktaḥ karma phalaṃ tyaktvā śāntim-āpnoti naiṣṭhikīm |
ayuktaḥ kāma-kāreṇa phale sakto nibadhyate || *12* ||

12. The centered-one, renouncing the fruits of actions, attains everlasting peace. But the unsteady one who is attached to the results of actions, being impelled by desire is subject to bondage.

Commentary

'The centered one' — is one who is centered upon the Self and has no hankering for anything else, being exclusively devoted to the Self. If a person renounces the fruits of actions and performs actions merely for the purpose of self-purification, everlasting peace will be obtained, which is the lasting experience of the ātman. *'The unsteady one'* — is one who is inclined towards material goals rather than Self-realization. Being impelled by desire, one becomes motivated by rewards and attached to the results of actions which keep one bound forever — in other words one becomes perpetually involved in the transmigratory cycle. The gist is this;— being free of attachment to results, attributing one's actions to Material Nature from which the senses have arisen, one should perform actions merely to free oneself from bondage.

Next, the transference of agency to Prakrti from whence the body has originated, is described: —

sarva karmāṇi manasā saṃnyasyāste sukhaṃ vaśī ||
nava-dvāre pure dehī naiva kurvan-na kārayan || *13* ||

13. Mentally renouncing all actions and self-controlled, the embodied ātman, dwells happily in the city of nine gates (i.e., the body), neither acting nor causing the body to act.

Commentary

The embodied one who is self-controlled, attributes all actions to the city of nine gates,. One rationalizes that all actions are based upon the interconnectedness of the ātman with the body which is the result of previous Karma, and not due its own essential nature. Being master of itself, it [the Self] dwells at ease, being neither mentally active nor causing the body to work.

Sri Krishna now teaches the natural condition of the Self as it really is:

na kartṛtvaṃ na karmāṇi lokasya sṛjati prabhuḥ |
na karma phala saṃyogaṃ svabhāvastu pravartate || *14* ||

14. The master [of the body—the ātman] does not initiate agency, nor actions, nor union with the fruits of actions in relation to the world (of embodied beings); it is the inherent tendencies alone that function.

Commentary

The “master” (*Prabhu* — that is, the Jīva who is the master of the body), in its own essential nature is not subject to Karma and therefore does not initiate

(a) the agency that is characteristic of sentient beings or
(b) their various and particular activities and
(c) is not responsible for the results of those actions (*Karma*) which bring about its embodiment as a sentient being.

What then is responsible for agency and its results? It is the natural tendencies alone that act. Tendencies (*svabhāva*) are comprised of subliminal activators (*saṃskāras*) originating from engagement with Prakrti. In other words agency and its results do not originate from the natural or pure state of the Self, but are generated by subtle subliminal activators created by the error of identifying the body as the Self.

nādatte kasyacit-pāpaṃ na caiva sukṛtaṃ vibhuḥ |
ajñānenāvṛtaṃ jñānaṃ tena muhyanti jantavaḥ || *15* ||

15. The all-pervading Self appropriates neither the demerit nor even the merit of any. Knowledge is enveloped by ignorance, thereby beings are deluded.

Commentary

The ātman is 'all-pervading', and not limited to a particular space. It cannot be restricted to the bodies of gods, humans, or animals and hence it is not the kinsman nor the enemy of any one. For this reason it does not appropriate the demerit or suffering of anyone else such as a son who is a relative and therefore dear to one; nor does it appropriate the happiness of anyone whom it regards with aversion. All this is the effect of *samskāras* or subliminal activators.

How then do these contrary *samskāras* originate? The answer is that knowledge is enveloped by the darkness of ignorance. The ātman's consciousness is enveloped or 'contracted' by previous Karmas which obstruct wisdom, so that one may experience the results of one's own actions. This Karma, which is like a veil obscuring wisdom, causes the Self to incarnate in the various bodies of gods etc. and generates the misconception that the body is the Self. It is through this misconception that more actions are performed which in turn produce more *samskāras* — sub-conscious impressions which in their turn predispose one to act in a certain manner.

jñānena tu tad-jñānaṃ yeṣāṃ nāśitam ātmanaḥ |
teṣām ādityavad-jñānaṃ prakāśayati tat param || *16* ||

16. But to those whose ignorance is destroyed by Self-realisation, their enlightenment is supreme and illumines like the sun.

Commentary

In the case of the enlightened ones, their delusion is destroyed by wisdom. This enlightenment arises from [studying] the teachings about the real nature of the ātman, and is then realized by daily practice. The purity of this wisdom is unsurpassed, and in the case of those Jīvas who regain the expansive consciousness that is natural to them, it is found to be unlimited and un-contracted and illumines everything like the sun.

Refutation of the Doctrine of the Absolute Unity of the Jīva

The Advaita Vedānta teaches that there is only one single Jīva in essence, and not a plurality of Jīvas. The appearance of many separate Jīvas that we observe in practical life is due to limiting factors (upādhis) known as Avidya or nescience. Ramanuja now digresses in order to refute this doctrine and to prove that there are in fact many Jīvas. — Editor

The essential plurality of the Jīvas in their original state is expressly mentioned in connection with the enlightened or fully realized ones by the expression 'those' in the above text. In the beginning (Gita 2:12) it was said —

> "There never was a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor any of these kings of men. Nor will there be any time in future when all of us shall cease to be"

— this statement is clarified here. Moreover, this plurality [of Jīvas] cannot be due to limiting factors imposed on a single universal ātman [as taught by the Advaitins]. For, as stated here, there is no residual trace of such limiting adjuncts (such as ignorance) for those that are fully enlightened, and yet still, they are described [by Krishna] as a plurality. Here consciousness is taught as an attribute inseparable from the essential nature of the Self, because a difference between the Self and its consciousness is indicated by the statement, 'Knowledge, in their case illuminates like the sun'. By the illustration of the sun, the relationship of the knower to its knowledge is likened to the luminous object and its luminosity. Therefore, it is appropriate to consider that one's consciousness

contracts through Karma, in the condition of *Samsāra* (transmigration) and expands in the stage of *Mokṣa* (liberation).

tad-buddhayas tad-ātmānas-tan-niṣṭhās tat-parāyaṇāḥ |
gacchanty-apunarāvṛttiṃ jñāna nirdhūta kalmaṣāḥ || *17* ||

17. Those who intellectually pursue That (ātman), whose minds are absorbed in That, who strive for That, and who hold That as their supreme goal, have their karmic hindrances destroyed by wisdom and go whence there is no return.

Commentary

'Those who intellectually pursue That,' — are those who are determined to attain Self-realization; *'those whose minds are absorbed in That,'* — are those whose minds are fully directed to [contemplation on] the ātman, and those *'who strive for That'*, — are those who are fully engaged in the practice of sādhana leading to Self-realization; *'those who hold That as their supreme goal'* — are those who consider Self-realization as the highest goal of life — such persons, having their accumulated [mental] impurities cleansed by the wisdom which arises in this way, attain the Self as taught:— *'Whence there is no return'* — means the state of enlightenment; ie. they attain the immaculate nature of Self which is its own.

vidyā vinaya saṃpanne brāhmaṇe gavi hastini |
śuni caiva śvapāke ca paṇḍitāḥ sama-darśinaḥ || *18* ||

18. The sages regard with equality one well-endowed with learning and humility, a Brahmana, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a dog-eater.

Commentary

The sages are those who have realized the true nature of the Self in all beings — they're all of the same nature, though they are perceived in radically dissimilar embodiments such as those of one endowed with learning and humility, a mere Brahmin [by birth], a cow, an elephant, a dog, a dog-eater and other sentient beings, because they all have consciousness as their essential attribute.

ihaiva tair-jitaḥ sargo yeṣāṃ sāmye sthitaṃ manaḥ |
nir-doṣaṃ hi samaṃ brahma tasmād-brahmaṇi sthitāḥ || *19* ||

19. Even here and now Samsāra is overcome by those whose minds rest in equanimity. For the Brahman (individual Self), when uncontaminated by Prakrti, is the same everywhere, therefore they are established in Brahman.

Commentary

Those who have realized the equality of all Jīvas in the aforesaid manner, even here and now, during their spiritual practice, overcome Samsāra. If one is established in the realization of the equality of all Selves, one then verily abides in [the state of] Brahman. Abiding in Brahman is indeed the conquest of Samsāra (transmigratory cycle). Those who realise the sameness of all Selves as having consciousness as their essential nature, are liberated.

Sri Krishna now teaches that manner of living by following which, a Karma Yogi attains maturity of wisdom in the form of equanimity of vision.

na prahṛṣyet priyaṃ prāpya nodvijet prāpya cāpriyam |
sthira-buddhir-asaṃmūḍho brahma-vid brahmaṇi sthitaḥ || *20* ||

20. One who having learnt of the Brahman (ātman) seeks to abide in Brahman, one whose mind is steadfastly fixed on That (ātman), undeluded — neither rejoices at gaining what is pleasant, nor grieves on obtaining what is unpleasant.

Commentary

One should not give way to feelings of elation or distress on attaining these two types of experiences. How? By fixing the mind on that which is enduring i.e. the ātman and not identifying the Self with the transient physical body. And how can this be done? One who learns about Brahman through instruction by the acharyas and abides in mindfulness of the Brahman, such a person remains steadily engaged in the practices leading to realization of Brahman (Self-realization).

The gist is this: — from the teachings of the acharyas who know the truth, one should learn everything about the Self. Endeavouring to actualize the same, one gives up the delusion of considering the body as the Self and remains fixed in the joyous experience of the vision of the unchanging Self. One should not rejoice and grieve when experiencing pleasant and unpleasant things, because such experiences arise from Material Nature and are impermanent.

bāhya-sparśeṣv-asaktātmā vindaty-ātmani yat sukham |
sa brahma-yoga-yuktātmā sukham akṣayam aśnute || *21* ||

21. With the mind detached from external contacts, one finds happiness in the Self — with the mind engaged in the contemplation of Brahman [ātman] one enjoys endless bliss.

ye hi saṃsparśajā bhogā duḥkha-yonaya eva ca |
ādy-antavantaḥ kaunteya na teṣu ramate budhaḥ || *22* ||

22. For those pleasures that arise from contact (with external factors) are sources of suffering. They have a beginning and an end, O Arjuna, the wise do not rejoice in them.

Commentary

'They have a beginning and an end,' that is, the pleasure last only for a brief period of time. The enlightened one who realizes the transient nature of sense gratification will not find pleasure in them.

śaknotīhaiva yaḥ soḍhuṃ prāk-śarīra vimokṣaṇāt |
kāma krodhodbhavaṃ vegaṃ sa yuktaḥ sa sukhī naraḥ || *23* ||

23. One who is able, even here, before one is released from the body, to resist the impulses arising from desire and anger, is a Yogi (competent for Self-realization); and a happy person.

Commentary

When one is able to withstand or to control the impulses of emotions like selfish-desire and anger through spiritual practice, then Self-realization is near at hand. But one becomes blessed by the actual experience and becomes immersed in the bliss of the Self only after the fall of the body (at the end of the Prarābdha or operative Karma).

yo'ntaḥ sukho'ntarā rāmas-tathāntar jyotir-eva yaḥ |
sa yogī brahma-nirvāṇaṃ brahma-bhūto'dhigacchati || *24* ||

24. One who is joyful within, whose pleasure is within, and similarly is illumined within — that Yogi, who having become the Brahman, attains the bliss of the Brahman.

Commentary

Illumined within — Self-qualities like joy, bliss, knowledge, purity, etc. increase spontaneously; *having become the Brahman* — becomes freed from the identification with the body/mind complex, *attains the bliss of Brahman* — that is; Self-realization.

labhante brahma-nirvāṇam ṛṣayaḥ kṣīṇa kalmaṣāḥ I
chinna-dvaidhā yatātmanaḥ sarva bhūta hite ratāḥ II *25* II

25. The sages who are free from the pairs of opposites, whose minds are well directed and who are devoted to the welfare of all beings, become cleansed of all impurities and attain the bliss of the Brahman.

Commentary

The sages (*rishis*) are those who are dedicated to the pursuit of Self-realisation. They are devoted to the welfare of all beings — that is, they are as interested in the welfare of all other beings as they are in their own; those persons who attain this state are freed from all impurities which are hindrances to enlightenment, and they attain to the bliss of the Brahman.

kāma krodha viyuktānāṃ yatīnāṃ yata-cetasām I
abhito brahma-nirvāṇaṃ vartate viditātmanām II *26* II

26. To those who are free from desire and anger, who aspire [for realisation] whose minds are controlled, and who have attained self-mastery — the Great Nirvana is close at hand.

Commentary

Sri Krishna concludes this dissertation on the subject of Action Yoga, with the reiteration that Action Yoga culminates in meditation directed at Self-realization.

sparśān kṛtvā bahir-bāhyāṃś-cakṣuś-caivāntare bhāvoḥ I
prāṇāpānau samau kṛtvā nāsābhyantara cāriṇau II *27* II

27. Shutting out all external contacts, focussing the gaze between the eye-brows, harmonizing the flow of the breath — inspiration and expiration,

yatendriya mano-buddhir-munir mokṣa parāyaṇaḥ I
vigat-ecchābhaya krodho yaḥ sadā mukta eva saḥ II *28* II

28. — having controlled the senses, mind and intellect, the sage who is intent on Liberation as the final goal, freed forever from desire, fear and anger — is indeed liberated forever.

Commentary

The method of meditation is here taught — shut out all contact with outside stimuli — that is, stop the external activity of the senses; sit with the back straight; focus the concentration between the eye-brows, breath evenly, the senses, mind and intellect should no longer be involved with anything other than focusing on the Self. One should be completely free from desire, fear and anger; and should be intent on achieving Liberation (*Mokṣa*) as the supreme goal — the sage who is thus intent on Self-realisation will indeed be liberated for ever, i.e., is almost liberated, as by virtue of this dedication one would soon be in the ultimate stage of enlightenment.

Sri Krishna now teaches that Action Yoga, described above, which is facilitated by the performance of obligatory and periodical duties and which culminates in meditation is easy to practice:

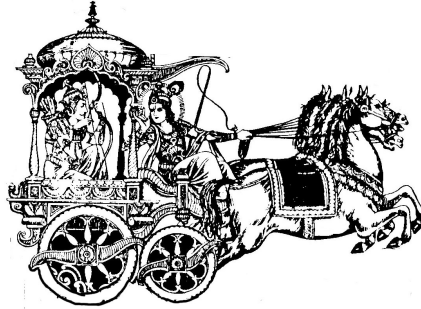
bhoktāraṃ yajñā tapasāṃ sarva loka maheśvaram |
suhṛdaṃ sarva-bhūtānāṃ jñātvā māṃ śāntim-ṛcchati || 29 ||

29. Knowing Me as the enjoyer of all sacrifices and austerities, as the Supreme Lord of all the worlds, as the Friend of every being, one attains peace.

Commentary

The gist is that knowing Me as the Supreme Lord of all the worlds and the 'friend' of all, and considering all works as service (*kainkarya*) to Me, one gladly engages oneself, because all creatures indeed strive to please a friend.

hariḥ oṃ tatsat
iti śrīmad bhagavadgītāsupaniṣatsu
brahma-vidyāyāṃ yogaśāstre śrīkṛṣṇārjuna saṃvāde
karma-sanyāsa yogo nāma pañcamo'dhyāyaḥ

Thus in the Upanishads of the Glorious Bhagavad Gita
The science of the Eternal, the Scripture of Yoga
The dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna
Ends the fifth discourse entitled
"Communion through Renunciation"

Chapter 6

Dhyāna Yogaḥ

Communion through Meditation

śrī bhagavān uvāca

anāśritaḥ karma-phalaṃ kāryaṃ karma karoti yaḥ |
sa saṃnyāsī ca yogī ca na nir-agnir-na cākriyaḥ || 1 ||

The Blessed Lord said:
1. One who performs obligatory works without expecting their fruits — is a Sanyāsin and Yogi, and not one who does not maintain sacred fires and performs no (prescribed) actions.

Commentary

One who performs actions without motivation for their rewards such as heaven, etc., with the conviction that it is one's duty, and sole aim, because they are forms of worship of the Supreme Being who is one's friend in every way and one's only goal — such a person is a real *Sanyāsin*, (a practitioner of *Jñāna Yoga*), and also a Karma Yogi, (practitioner of Karma Yoga). And not one who is disinclined to perform the enjoined works such as sacrifices, etc., nor one who is devoted to mere knowledge alone [without any practice]..

yaṃ saṃnyāsam-iti prāhur-yogaṃ taṃ viddhi pāṇḍava |
na hy-asaṃnyasta saṅkalpo yogī bhavati kaścana || 2 ||

2. That which is called Sannyāsa (Renunciation) O Arjuna, know to be Yoga (Karma Yoga). For no one becomes a true Karma Yogin without relinquishing the delusive identification of the body with the Self.

Commentary

The term Sanyāsa refers here to Karma Yoga only, which also includes Jñāna Yoga or knowledge of the true nature of Self. One who has not attained the level of realisation that the body is different than the Self, cannot become a Karma Yogi of the type described here.

ārurukṣor-muner-yogaṃ karma kāraṇam ucyate |
yogārūḍhasya tasyaiva śamaḥ kāraṇam ucyate || 3 ||

3. For the sage who seeks to ascend to the heights of Yoga, action is said to be the means; but when one has reached the summit of Yoga, quiescence is said to be the means.

Commentary

In the case of one who aspires for Moksha, who desires Self-realisation, Karma-Yoga is declared to be the preferable means. For the same person, who has once become established in [the practice of] Yoga— quiescence, or abstinence from actions, is said to the means. One should continue to perform actions until one has attained liberation (Moksha) in the form of Self-realisation.

When does one succeed in Yoga? Sri Krishna replies:—

yadā hi nendriyārtheṣu na karmasv-anuṣajjate |
sarva saṅkalpa saṃnyāsī yogārūḍhas-tad-ocyate || *4* ||

4. When one loses all attachment for the sense-objects and to works, then one indeed has abandoned all desires and is considered to have reached the heights of Yoga.

Commentary

The ultimate stage of Yoga has been reached when the spiritual practitioner, because of a natural disposition to experience the Self, loses attachment to sense-objects and 'things other than the ātman', as well as activities associated with them. Therefore, for one who wishes to succeed in Yoga, but is still disposed to sense-gratification, Karma Yoga, consisting of the [constant] practice of detachment to these objects, becomes the means for success in Yoga.

Sri Krishna further elucidates the same idea:—

uddhared-ātman-ātmānaṃ nātmānam avasādayet |
ātmaiva hy-ātmano bandhur-ātmaiva ripur-ātmanaḥ || *5* ||

5. One should raise one's Self by one's own mind and not allow one's Self to sink; for the mind alone is the friend of the Self, and the mind alone is the adversary of the Self.

Commentary

By the Self (ātman), that is, by the mind which is unattached to sense-objects, one should raise one's self. One should not allow one's mind which is inclined to sense gratification to drag one down. Friends and enemies exist in the mind alone.

bandhur-ātmā'tmanas tasya yenātmaivātmanā jitaḥ |
anātmanastu śatrutve vartetātmaiva śatruvat || *6* ||

6. The mind is the friend of one who has conquered the mind. But for one whose mind is uncontrolled, the mind, like an adversary, remains hostile.

Commentary

The meaning is that an uncontrolled mind is a hindrance to the attainment of the supreme state of Beatitude. It has been said by Bhagavan Parashara also: —

" One's mind is the cause of both bondage and release. Its addiction to sense-objects is the cause of bondage; its freedom from sense-objects is the means of one's release (V.P.6.7.28).

The suitable state for commencing the Yoga of meditation is now taught: —

jitātmanaḥ praśāntasya paramātmā samāhitaḥ |
śītoṣṇa sukha-duḥkheṣu tathā mānāpamānayoḥ || *7* ||

7. Of the self-controlled and serene, the Over-Self is perfectly balanced in heat and cold, in pleasure and pain, and in honour and dishonour,

Commentary

The Self is said to be perfectly balanced in one who is free from the agitation caused by the pairs of opposites and who is completely calm; in other words 'the Over-Self' becomes exceedingly well focused so as to be prepared for meditation.

Here the individual Self (*Pratyag-ātman*) is called 'the Over-Self' (Param-ātman), — this interpretation is justified by the context. The individual Self can also be called 'great', because it is at a higher state relative to previous successive stages. Or the sentence may construed as follows: — *atma param samāhitah.* — The Self is exceedingly well balanced.

jñāna vijñāna tṛptātmā kūṭastho jitendriyaḥ |
yukta ity-ucyate yogī sama-loṣṭāśma kāñcanaḥ || *8* ||

8. The Yogi who is content with the knowledge of the Self and also of knowledge of the difference (between the Self and the physical body), who is established in the Self, whose senses are subdued and to whom earth, stone and gold seem all alike is said to be well-adjusted.

Commentary

That Karma Yogi whose mind is satisfied with reasoned knowledge (*Jñāna*) of the Self and the specific knowledge (*vijñāna*) of the difference of its intrinsic nature from Material Nature (*Prakṛti*); who remains in a state of unshaken (*Kuṭastham*) awareness of the oneness of the Self in all beings. To whom earth, stone and gold are of equal value — because of the lack of interest in any material objects of enjoyment on account of an intense earnestness to realise /experience the real nature of the Self — such a one is called well-adjusted or integrated i.e., fit for the practice of meditation.

And also:—

suhṛn mitrāry-udāsīna madhyastha dveṣya bandhuṣu |
sādhuṣv-api ca pāpeṣu sama-buddhir viśiṣyate || *9* ||

9. One who regards with equality, well-wishers, friends, foes, the indifferent, neutrals, the hateful, relatives, and even the righteous and the unrighteous — excels.

Commentary

'Well-wishers' (*suhrt*) are those who care about one, regardless of differences in age. *'Friends'* (*mitra*) are well-wishers of equal age. *'Foes'* (*ari*) are those who wish ill to one because of some particular cause. *'The indifferent'* (*udāsin*) are those who are neither friendly nor hostile because of there being no reason for either type of feeling; *'neutrals'* (*madhyastha*) are those who by their very nature are incapable of either friendship or hostility. *'The hateful'* (*dveṣi*) are those who wish ill to one even from birth. 'Relations' (*bandhu*) those who bear goodwill from birth. *'The righteous'* (*sādhu*) are those devoted to the practice of virtue. *'The unrighteous'* (*pāpi*) are those given to wickedness.

Self-realisation being the only goal of meditation, and because all the well-wishing friends and the others, cannot contribute anything to this goal and enemies cannot detract from it, one who regards them all with an equal eye as pure Jīvas, excels in respect of fitness for the practice of meditation.

yogī yuñjīta satatam ātmānaṃ rahasi sthitaḥ |
ekākī yatacittātmā nirāśīr aparigrahaḥ || *10* ||

10. The Yogi should constantly apply the mind to Yoga, remaining alone in a solitary place, controlling discursive thinking, free from desire and the sense of possession,

Commentary

The Yogi who is steady in the practice of Karma Yoga should 'constantly', i.e., daily, when doing the practice, engage the mind in the contemplation on the true nature of the ātman. One should restrain the habit of constantly thinking about things. One should not depend on anything except the ātman and should abandon the idea of possession with regard to anything other than the ātman.

śucau deśe pratiṣṭhāpya sthitam-āsanam ātmanaḥ |
nāty-ucchritaṃ nāti-nīcaṃ cailājina kuśottaram || *11* ||

11. In a clean place, having established for oneself a firm seat which is neither too high nor too low, and covering it with cloth, deer-skin and kusha grass one over the other,

tatraikāgraṃ manaḥ kṛtvā yata-cittendriya kriyaḥ |
upaviśyāsane yuñjyād-yogam-ātma viśuddhaye || 12 ||

12. there, sitting on the seat, focusing the mind in concentration, with the thoughts and the senses restrained, one should practice Yoga for the purification of the self.

Commentary

'In a clean place' means in a place pure in itself, not owned or controlled by impure persons and uncontaminated by impure things; having established a firm seat made of wood or similar material — seated on it in a way which promotes the serenity of mind — *one should practice 'Yoga'*, i.e. practice meditation on the Self in order to end one's bondage.

samaṃ kāya-śiro-grīvaṃ dhārayann-acalaṃ sthiraḥ |
saṃprekṣya nāsikāgraṃ svaṃ diśaś-cānavalokayan || 13 ||

13. Holding the trunk, head and neck erect, motionless and steady, focusing [the attention] at the tip of the nose , and without looking around;

praśāntātmā vigata-bhīr-brahmacāri vrate sthitaḥ |
manaḥ saṃyamya mac-citto yukta āsīta mat-paraḥ || 14 ||

14. Serene and fearless, firm in the vow of celibacy, holding the mind in check and fixing the thoughts on Me, one should sit in meditation, holding Me to be Supreme.

Commentary

Keeping the body, head and neck erect and still, well seated in order to be steady; serene, i.e., with a peaceful mind; — one should sit in meditation remaining focused and thinking about Krishna only.

yuñjann-evaṃ sadā'tmānaṃ yogī niyata-mānasaḥ |
śāntiṃ nirvāṇa paramāṃ mat-saṃsthām adhigacchati || 15 ||

15. Applying the mind constantly in this way, the Yogi, with a controlled mind, attains the peace which is the summit of beatitude and which abides in Me forever.

Commentary

'Applying the mind on Me,' — that is, the Supreme Brahman, the Supreme Being and the holy and auspicious object of meditation, 'the Yogi with a controlled mind,' — by focusing on Me, the mind becomes purified and thus steady, one then attains the peace which abides in Me which is of the highest degree of bliss which endures forever in Me.

Sri Krishna, who is the holy and auspicious object of meditation, after thus teaching how the mind should be fixed on Himself, proceeds to speak of the other requisites of Yoga practice, which purify the mind for one who commences the practice of Yoga for Self-realisation.

nāty-aśnatas-tu yogo'sti na caikāntam-anaśnataḥ |
na cāti svapnaśīlasya jāgrato naiva cārjuna || 16 ||

16. Yoga is not for one who over-eats, nor for one who fasts excessively; nor for one who sleeps too much, nor for one who stays awake for lengthy periods, O Arjuna.

Commentary

Over-eating and excessive fasting are opposed to Yoga practice, as are excessive recreation and non-recreation, too much sleep and too little sleep. So too, are overwork and idleness.

yuktāhāra vihārasya yukta ceṣṭasya karmasu |
yukta svapnāvabodhasya yogo bhavati duḥsvahā || *17* ||

17. Yoga becomes the destroyer of sorrow for one who is moderate in food and recreation, who is temperate in actions, who is moderate in sleep and wakefulness.

Commentary

'The 'Yoga which destroys all sorrow' — that is, liberates one from bondage, is successfully practiced only by one who is moderate in all things.

yadā viniyataṃ cittam-ātmany-evāvatiṣṭhate |
niḥspṛhaḥ sarva-kāmebhyo yukta ity-ucyate sadā || *18* ||

18. When the subdued mind rests in the Self alone, then, free from all craving for objects of desire, one is said to be 'harmonised'.

Commentary

When the mind, which usually pursues sense gratification, abandons such desires and 'rests in the Self alone' — that is, becomes well-settled because of the realisation of the unsurpassable good in the Self alone, and rests there alone steadily, without movement — then, being 'free from all yearning', one is said to be well-balanced.

yathā dīpo nivātasthe neṅgate sopamā smṛtā |
yogino yata-cittasya yuñjato yogam-ātmanaḥ || *19* ||

19. The controlled mind of a Yogi who practices Yoga is compared to a lamp which does not flicker when placed in a windless spot.

yatroparamate cittaṃ niruddhaṃ yoga-sevayā |
yatra caivātmanā'tmānaṃ paśyann-ātmani tuṣyati || *20* ||

20. When the mind, restrained by the practice of Yoga, attains that Infinite Bliss, and when seeing the ātman by the mind, one is satisfied by the ātman alone;

sukham-ātyantikaṃ yat-tad-buddhi-grāhyam-atīndriyam |
vetti yatra na caivāyaṃ sthitaś-calati tattvataḥ || *21* ||

21. when one knows that intense joy which can be experienced by the intellect but is beyond the grasp of the senses, wherein established one departs not from that condition;

yaṃ labdhvā cāparaṃ lābhaṃ manyate nādhikaṃ tataḥ |
yasmin sthito na duḥkhena guruṇā'pi vicālyate || *22* ||

22. having gained which, one considers that there is no greater gain than it; wherein established, one is not moved even by the heaviest sorrow—

taṃ vidyād duḥkha saṃyoga viyogaṃ yoga saṃjñitam |
sa niścayena yoktavyo yogo 'nirviṇṇa cetasā || *23* ||

23. know this [state] of deliverance from association with suffering to be Yoga. This Yoga must be practiced with determination and with a mind free from despondency.

Commentary

Yoga is here defined as 'freedom from all involvement with suffering' and is achieved through the practice of the discipline of meditation. Through the practice of meditation the mind becomes completely subdued and rejoices by being in a state of unsurpassed bliss, one then directly perceives 'the Self (ātman)' by 'the mind (ātman)', one becomes delighted by the ātman and indifferent to all other objects. Having once achieved that state, one does not digress there from, because of the overwhelming bliss that is being experienced. Yoga [the highest meditative state] has been achieved when one is not emotionally moved even by 'the heaviest sorrow' caused by a bereavement like the death of a virtuous son — this Yoga must be practiced with dedication and a mind free from despondency, through the conviction even at the initial stage, that this practice is in itself enjoyable.

saṅkalpa prabhavān kāmāṃs-tyaktvā sarvān-aśeṣataḥ |
manasaivendriya-grāmaṃ viniyamya samantataḥ || 24 ||

24. Renouncing without reserve, all desires born of imagination (sankalpa) and completely restraining the whole group of senses by the mind from all directions;

śanaiḥ śanairu-paramed buddhyā dhṛti-gṛhītayā |
ātma-saṃsthaṃ manaḥ kṛtvā na kiñcid-api cintayet || 25 ||

25. — very gradually, one should attain tranquility with the help of the intellect held by a firm resolution; having focused the mind upon the ātman one should think of nothing else.

Commentary

There are two kinds of desires:—

(1) those which arise from contact between the senses and their objects like heat, cold etc. and

(2) those which are generated by the mind (sankalpa is the will or imagination) like those for offspring, property etc.

Of these, the latter category, because of their nature, can easily be given up — one should mentally relinquish all these by contemplating on their lack of real connection with the Self. In respect of unavoidable desires resulting from contact with sense objects; relinquish the idea that pleasure and pain affect the Self; and withdraw all the senses from contact with their sense-objects — one should think of nothing else but the ātman. Little by little, through the power of discrimination, one should focus the mind on the ātman alone.

yato yato niścarati manaś-cañcalam asthiraṃ |
tatas-tato niyamyaitad-ātmanyeva vaśaṃ nayet || 26 ||

26. Wherever the fickle and unsteady mind wanders, one should subdue it then and there, and bring it back under the control of the Self alone.

Commentary

Whenever the mind, on account of its fickle and unsteady nature, wanders away one should subdue it, bring it under control, and return it to the contemplation on the incomparable bliss of the ātman.

praśānta manasaṃ hyenaṃ yoginaṃ sukham-uttamam |
upaiti śānta rajasaṃ brahma-bhūtam akalmaṣam || 27 ||

27. For supreme bliss indeed, comes to this Yogi whose mind is at peace, who is free from unskillful action, from whom the quality of Rajas has departed, and who has become the Brahman.

Commentary

Supreme bliss — direct experience of the ātman in its essential state, is achieved by the practitioner whose mind abides in the ātman; whose impurities thereby are completely burnt up.

"Who has become the Brahman", means who remains steady in the realisation of one's essential nature as being the blissful ātman [and not the body].

yuñjann-evaṃ sadā'tmānaṃ yogī vigata kalmaṣaḥ |
sukhena brahma saṃsparśam atyantaṃ sukham-aśnute || *28* ||

28. Thus devoting oneself to the Yoga of the Self-realisation, freed from mental impurities, the Yogi easily attains the supreme bliss of contact with the Brahman.

Commentary

Now in the succeeding verses from 29th to 32nd, Sri Krishna teaches that there are four stages in attaining the actualisation of Yoga —

sarva-bhūtastham ātmānaṃ sarva-bhūtāni cātmani |
īkṣate yoga-yuktātmā sarvatra sama-darśanaḥ || *29* ||

29. With the mind harmonised by Yoga one sees equality everywhere; one sees one's Self as abiding in all beings and all beings in one's own Self.

Commentary

One whose mind is fixed in Yoga has complete equality of vision. An enlightened Yogi therefore, sees himself as abiding in all beings and all beings as abiding in his own Self; — in the sense that he sees the similarity between his own Jīva and those of every other being.

yo māṃ paśyati sarvatra sarvaṃ ca mayi paśyati |
tasyāhaṃ na praṇaśyāmi sa ca me na praṇaśyati || *30* ||

30. He who sees Me everywhere and everything in Me; I am not separated from him and he is never separated from Me.

Commentary

He who, having reached the highest stage of spiritual development, has realised similarity of nature with Me, also sees similarity of all Jīvas to Myself when they are freed from merit (*pāpa*) and demerit (*puṇya*) and when they are established in their own (true) essence, as declared in the Veda;— 'Being untainted, he (the enlightened one) attains the supreme degree of equality' (Mun.Up., 3.1.3). To him who realises the nature of his own ātman, I am not lost on account of My similarity to him i.e., I do not become invisible to him. He (the Yogi) viewing his own ātman as similar to Me, always remains within My particular regard, because of our intimate relationship.

Sri Krishna now describes the third stage (of Yoga):—

sarva-bhūta-sthitaṃ yo māṃ bhajaty-ekatvam-āsthitaḥ |
sarvathā vartmāno'pi sa yogī mayi vartate || *31* ||

31. The Yogi who, established in unity, worships Me dwelling in all beings, he abides in Me, howsoever he may live.

Commentary

The Yogi who is established in a state of harmony because of having the same form of expanded consciousness (as Myself), worships Me steadfastly by disregarding the differences of Prakrti (i.e., of the physical bodies). That Yogi, regardless of his mode of living, even while coming out of the state of meditation, continues to perceive Me only, in his own ātman as well as when seeing all other beings. The meaning is that he is [constantly] aware of the similarity to Me in his own Jīva and in the Jīvas of all other beings.

Now Sri Krishna proceeds to speak of the highest stage beyond this: —

ātmaupamyena sarvatra samaṃ paśyati yo'rjuna |
sukhaṃ vā yadi vā duḥkhaṃ sa yogī paramo mataḥ || 32 ||

32. One who, by reason of the identity of Jīvas, sees that pleasure or pain is the same everywhere; that Yogi, O Arjuna, is deemed as the highest.

Commentary

One who sees all Jīvas as constituted similarly of expanded consciousness in their essential being — regards pleasures in the form of the birth of a son etc. and grief in the form of the death of one's son, as the same as that of others — on account of all these experiences being unrelated to the true Self. In other words viewing one's own personal pleasures and pains of the above description, as being non-different from those of others, of the same kind. This Yogi is considered to be the highest; having reached the summit of Yoga.

arjuna uvāca

yo'yaṃ yogas-tvayā proktaḥ sāmyena madhusūdhana |
etasyāhaṃ na paśyāmi cañcalatvāt sthitiṃ sthirām || 33 ||

Arjuna said:

33. This Yoga of equanimity, which has been taught by You, O Krishna, I can not imagine it's steady continuance, because of the restlessness of the mind.

cañcalaṃ hi manaḥ kṛṣṇa pramāthi balavad-dṛḍham |
tasyāhaṃ nigrahaṃ manye vāyoriva suduṣkaram || 34 ||

34. For the mind is fickle, O Krishna, turbulent, powerful and stubborn. I deem it as difficult to control as to control the wind.

Commentary

For the mind, which is fickle even in matters which are incessantly practiced and are dear to one, cannot be firmly focused in one spot by anyone. The mind agitates one violently and flies away stubbornly elsewhere. I regard the restraint and focusing of such a mind on the ātman, which is of quite an opposite nature, to be as difficult to do as restraining a strong contrary gale with such things as fragile fans.

śrī bhagavān uvāca

asaṃśayaṃ mahābāho mano dur-nigrahaṃ calam |
abhyāsena tu kaunteya vairāgyeṇa ca gṛhyate || 35 ||

The Blessed Lord said:

35. The mind is undoubtedly hard to subdue and fickle, O mighty-armed one, but, O son of Kunti, by repeated practice and by the exercise of dispassion it can be brought under control.

Commentary

No doubt, the mind is fickle and hard to subdue, however, it can be subdued with difficulty by cultivating a favourable attitude towards the ātman by repeated contemplation of its being a repository of auspicious attributes [these being eternity, self-

luminosity, bliss, freedom from Karma, purity etc.], and by the avoiding the [sensual] hankering produced, by reflecting upon the magnitude of negativity in [material] objects.

asaṃyatātmanā yogo duṣprāpa iti me matiḥ |
vaśyātmanā tu yatatā śakyo'vāptum upāyataḥ || 36 ||

36. In my opinion Yoga [harmony] is hard to attain by a person of unrestrained mind. However, it can be attained through skilful means by one, who strives for it and has a subdued mind.

Commentary

Yoga of equality of vision can be attained by proper means, by one who constantly practices, whose mind is subdued by Right Actions (Karma Yoga) as taught before.

Arjuna now asks questions about the greatness of Yoga, as it really is, about which he has been taught.

arjuna uvāca

ayatiḥ śraddhayopeto yogāc-calita-mānasaḥ |
aprāpya yoga-saṃsiddhiṃ kāṃ gatiṃ kṛṣṇa gacchati || 37 ||

Arjuna said:
37. What becomes of that person, O Krishna, who has conviction, but due to the wandering of the mind and the lack of diligent effort, fails to attain perfection in [meditation] Yoga?

kaccin-nobhaya-vibhraṣṭaś-chinnābhram iva naśyati |
apratiṣṭho mahābāho vimūḍho brahmaṇaḥ pathi || 38 ||

38. Having no support, confused in the path leading to Brahman, and thus fallen from both, does one not perish, O mighty armed, like a broken cloud?

etan-me saṃśayaṃ kṛṣṇa chettum arhasy-aśeṣataḥ |
tvad-anyaḥ saṃśayasyāsya chettā na hy-upapadyate || 39 ||

39. This doubt of mine, O Krishna, you should remove completely for there is no other than you who can dispel it.

Commentary

What happens to one who has undertaken to practice meditation with sincerity, but does not have the ability to sustain diligent exertion in practice, nor actually succeeds in the practice, and whose mind constantly wanders? Does such a person perish like a small piece of cloud torn from a large mass of cloud — annihilated without reaching another large mass of cloud?

Now, does one fall on both accounts? One is without support and is confused about the path leading to Self-realisation. He is without support in the sense that Karma or rituals which constitute the means for attaining heaven etc., do not provide support to a person who has rejected their rewards. He is also confused about the path leading to the Brahman [Self-realisation] on which he has just begun his [spiritual] journey— he has lost his way. Does he then become destroyed by failing on both accounts the attainment of heaven through Ritualism on the one hand and liberation through Meditation on the other.

śrī bhagavān uvāca

pārtha naiveha nāmutra vināśas tasya vidyate |
na hi kalyāṇa-kṛt kaścid durgatiṃ tāta gacchati || 40 ||

The Blessed Lord said:
40. Neither here [in this world] nor there [in the next], O Arjuna, is there destruction for him. For verily, no one who does good, my son, ever comes to grief.

Commentary

The meaning is that there is no ruin either in the form of failure to attain one's goal or in the form of *Pratyavaya*, — which means the attainment of undesirable results because of defects in the performance of works. Therefore no one who practices this incomparably auspicious Yoga ever comes to an negative end in the present, past or future.

Sri Krishna explains how this is so:

prāpya puṇya-kṛtāṃ lokān uṣitvā śāśvatīḥ samāḥ |
śucināṃ śrīmatāṃ gehe yoga-bhraṣṭo 'bhijāyate || *41* ||

41. Having attained to the realms of the righteous and dwelt there for many long years, one who has fallen from Yoga is born again in the house of the pure and prosperous.

Commentary

This person, who has drifted away from the path of Self-realisation because of desire for any kind of material enjoyment whatsoever, will gain those very enjoyments through the excellence of Yoga alone. Having attained to the realms attained by those who do meritorious acts, one dwells there for a long time, until all desire for such enjoyments is exhausted. Then, free of desire this person who has fallen from Yoga at the very beginning, is born, by virtue of the excellence of Yoga, in a family of those who are competent in their practice of Yoga.

athavā yoginām eva kule bhavati dhīmatām |
etaddhi durlabhataraṃ loke janma yadīdṛśam || *42* ||

42. Or one is born into a family of wise Yogis; but verily such a birth in this world is very difficult to obtain.

Commentary

If one falls from the spiritual path at an advanced stage of development, one will be born in a family of wise Yogis who practice Yoga and are themselves capable of teaching Yoga. Thus, these two types of birth — one in the family of those who are competent to practice Yoga and the other in that of accomplished Yogis — are extremely rare among common people in this world. But Yoga is of such great potentiality that even this rare blessing is achieved through it.

tatra taṃ buddhi saṃyogaṃ labhate paurva-dehikam |
yatate ca tato bhūyaḥ saṃsiddhau kurunandana || *43* ||

43. There, O Arjuna, one regains the disposition of mind which one had acquired in the former body, and from there one strives more than before for success in Yoga.

Commentary

Like one aroused from sleep, one strives again from the point where one had left off, before attaining complete success. One strives in order to overcome all impediments.

pūrvābhyāsane tenaiva hriyate hyavaśo'pi saḥ |
jijñāsur-api yogasya śabda-brahmātivartate || *44* ||

44. By that very former practice one is borne on in spite of oneself. Even one who merely enquires about Yoga, transcends the Sabda-Brahman.

Commentary

The person who has fallen away from meditation is carried on towards the summit of Yoga alone by the virtue of previous practice. Even a person, who has not actually engaged in meditation but has only been desirous of knowing about it; in other words, has failed to follow it up, acquires once again the same desire to practice Yoga. One then begins the practice of Yoga, the first stage of which is Karma Yoga, and thus transcends Sabda-Brahman (sonic vibration) which is that [energy] aspect of Brahman which manifests as gods, humans, earth, sky, heaven etc., namely; Prakrti or Material Nature. The meaning is that having been liberated from the bonds of Prakrti, one attains the ātman which is incapable of being described by words and which comprises solely of consciousness and bliss.

prayatnād yatamānastu yogī saṃśuddha-kilbiṣaḥ |
aneka-janma saṃsiddhas tato yāti parāṃ gatim || *45* ||

45. But the Yogi striving earnestly, purified of all negative karma, and perfected gradually through many births, reaches the supreme goal.

tapasvibhyo'dhiko yogī jñānibhyo'pi mato'dhikaḥ |
karmibhyaścādhiko yogī tasmād yogī bhavārjuna || *46* ||

46. The Yogi is considered to be superior to the ascetics, superior to the intellectuals, and even superior to the ritualists; therefore, O Arjuna, become a Yogi.

Commentary

Whatever object of human endeavour is attained by mere austerity (self-control), by knowledge of different subjects (other than Self-realisation) and by mere rituals like the horse-sacrifice etc.,— greater than all of these is the goal achieved through Yoga. Consequently the Yogi is superior to those who practice austerity, to those who possess learning and to those who perform rituals. Therefore, O Arjuna, become a Yogi.

Thus, so far the vision of the ātman, which has been expounded in the teachings of Prajāpati and forms a part of the supreme Vidya (science of Brahman), has been taught; then Sri Krishna extols that supreme Vidya:

yogināṃ api sarveṣāṃ mad-gatenāntarātmanā |
śraddhāvān bhajate yo māṃ sa me yuktatamo mataḥ || *47* ||

47. And among all the Yogis and also with all others, one whose inner self is directed to Me, who worships Me with faith — such a one is deemed by Me to be the most accomplished.

Commentary

'Yogināṃ' — is in the genitive case here, and has to be taken in the sense of the ablative. In verse 29 Yogis of four levels of spiritual attainment were mentioned. Since the Yogi who is now mentioned in this passage cannot be included in the four types mentioned earlier, the genitive case specifying one out of many will be inappropriate here.

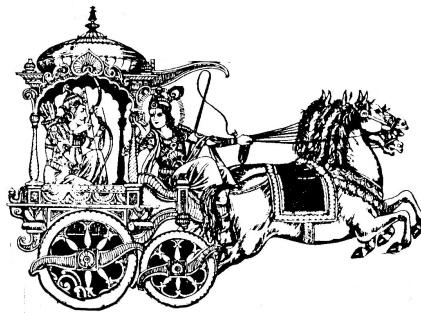
In the clause *'api sarveśām,'* the word *'sarva'* (all) refers to the ascetics, intellectuals and ritualists. According to the grammatical principle set forth, here also the case ending has to be taken as ablative. The meaning therefore is that the Yogi who is now referred to, is the most integrated compared with those mentioned earlier, and all other types. Compared to this Yogin, the differences in points of superiority and inferiority among the other Yogis such as the practicing austerities, possessing wisdom or performing rituals, are of no significance — like mustard-seeds compared to Mount Meru. Even though there exists

smallness and largeness in relation to one another among mustard-seeds, still when compared to Meru, such distinctions among them have no significance, as they are all tiny compared to Meru.

“I (Krishna) consider the most integrated to be one, who has the mind, fixed on Me, as the only object worthy of love. Furthermore such a person has realised complete dependence upon Me. Having 'faith,' i.e., striving assiduously to attain Me because of being unable to bear a moment's separation from Me. 'Worshiping Me,' i.e., serves Me with devotion and meditates on Me as the Supreme Being.”

“My divine form is the repository of an inestimable multitude of auspicious, unlimited and unsurpassed attributes such as knowledge, power, lordship, energy, creative potency and splendour. My sacred form is the repository of infinite, unsurpassed attributes agreeable and highly worthy, such as radiance, beauty, fragrance, tenderness, pervading sweetness and youthfulness which are in perfect harmony, inconceivable and divine, wondrous, eternal and flawless. My essential nature and qualities transcend all thought and words. I am the great ocean of compassion, condescension, motherly love and beauty. I am the impartial refuge of all beings without exception and without considerations of any difference. I relieve the distress of supplicants, and I am the great, unfathomable ocean of affection for supplicants. I have manifest Myself to all people without compromising My essential nature. I have incarnated Myself in the house of Vasudeva and have illuminated the whole world with My limitless and excellent glory; and have gratified the entire universe with My impeccable power of beauty.”

hariḥ oṃ tatsat
iti śrīmad bhagavadgītāsupaniṣatsu
brahmavidyāyāṃ yogaśāstre śrīkṛṣṇārjuna saṃvāde
dhyāna-yogo nāma
ṣaṣṭho’dhyāyaḥ

Thus in the Upanishads of the Glorious Bhagavad Gita
The science of the Eternal, the Scripture of Yoga
The dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna
Ends the sixth discourse entitled
“Communion through Meditation”

Chapter 7

Adhyātma Yogaḥ

Communion through Knowledge & Realization

Summary of the Teaching

Now, the means — worship/meditation (*upāsana*) for attaining Nārāyaṇa the Consort of Sri is introduced. The first group of six chapters dealt with the knowledge of the true nature of the Self, which is the pre-requisite for upāsana, which is then accomplished through Right Action (*Karma Yoga*).

In this group of six chapters the nature of the Supreme Being (*Para-Brahman*) and His worship (*upāsana*) designated by the term '*Bhakti'*, (loving devotion) are taught. This same teaching will be summarised later on in chapter 18 verses 46 — 54.

Rāmānuja's Concept of Bhakti

It is established in the Vedanta texts that *upāsana* (worship/meditation) done with *bhakti* (loving devotion) constitutes the only means for attaining the Supreme. What is referred to as knowledge (*vedana*) in passages such as:—

> 'Knowing Him alone does one pass over death (Sve. Up. 3;8),
>
> 'Knowing Him alone one becomes immortal here' (Tai. Arany., 3.12.7)

— has the same meaning as terms contained in the texts like;—

> 'Verily my dear the Self should be seen... should be meditated upon steadily' (Br. Up., 2.4.5),
>
> 'Let him worship the Self alone as the object to be attained' (Br. Up., 1.4.15),
>
> 'When the mind is pure, then the remembrance (ie. loving meditation) is firm, when the memory is attained, there is release from all knots of the heart' (Cha. Up., 7.26.2),
>
> 'The fetter of the heart is broken, all doubts are solved, all his works (Karmas) perish, when He has been seen, who is high and low' (Mun.Up., 2.2.8).

These texts establish the conclusion that the terms; meditation (*dhyāna*) and worship (*upāsana*) indicate mindfulness (*vedana*) which is a sequence of thoughts about the Supreme Being. The consequence of this thought flow is that one is chosen by the Supreme Being. This *upāsana* itself becomes delectable because the object of mindfulness (the Supreme Lord Himself) is so dear (to the practitioner). This is made clear by the specification given in the text;—

> 'The Self cannot be obtained by instruction, nor by worldly intelligence, nor by much hearing. He whom this Self chooses, by him alone It can be attained, and to him the Self reveals It's self" (Ka. Up., 2.;23; Mun.Up., 3.2.3).

It is this thought flow which is called "Bhakti", as defined by texts like:—

> 'Constant meditation accompanied with love is termed Bhakti' (Laingottara-Purana).

The following two passages are therefore synonymous: —

> 'He who thus knows Him, becomes immortal here; there is no other path for liberation'. (Tai. Aran., 3.12.7),

and

> 'Neither by study of the Vedas, nor by austerities, nor by alms-giving, nor even by sacrifice, can I be seen as you have seen. But by exclusive devotion, O Arjuna, I can be thus truly known and seen and entered into' (Gita 11.53-54).

Here in the seventh chapter five principal topics are dealt with:

1. The real nature of the Supreme Being who is the object of worship,
2. His concealment by Prakṛti (Material Nature),
3. Removal of the veil of Māya (delusion) through taking refuge in the Lord
4. The various types of devotees and
5. The superiority of the wise.

śrī bhagavān uvāca

mayyāsakta manāḥ pārtha yogaṃ yuñjan madāśrayaḥ |
asaṃśayaṃ samagraṃ māṃ yathā jñāsyasi tacchṛṇu || *1* ||

The Blessed Lord said:

1. With your mind focused on Me, having Me for your support and practising Yoga — listen, O Arjuna, to how you can, without doubt, know Me fully.

Commentary

"Listen attentively to this teaching which I am about to impart to you, by which you will understand Me conclusively and completely. I am the object of the Yogic contemplation in which you are engaged with a mind so deeply attached to Me by virtue of your overwhelming love. It would probably disintegrate instantaneously the moment it lost contact with My essential Being, attributes, pastimes and glories, and with your very Self resting so completely on Me — it would break up when bereft of Me."

jñānaṃ te'haṃ savijñānam idaṃ vakṣyāmy-aśeṣataḥ |
yajjñātvā neha bhūyo'nyajjñātavyam avaśiṣyate || 2 ||

2. I will declare to you in full, this knowledge along with the differentiating insight (Vijñana), knowing which nothing else remains to be known.

Commentary

Vijñāna (differentiating insight) is that knowledge of the Godhead in which His nature is clearly distinguished from all other things. The Supreme Being is distinguished from all things, animate and inanimate, as the only Being that is devoid of all negativity and is endowed with innumerable, infinitely varied, positive and unsurpassed attributes.

Sri Krishna declares that this teaching is difficult to attain: —

manuṣyāṇāṃ sahasreṣu kaścid yatati siddhaye |
yatatām-api siddhānāṃ kaścin māṃ vetti tattvataḥ || *3* ||

3. Among thousands of men, perhaps one strives for perfection; even among those who strive for perfection, one only may know Me; and among those who know Me, one alone perhaps, knows Me in reality.

Commentary

'Men', — those dvijas (Brāhmans, Kṣatriyas and Vaiṣyas) who are qualified to observe the meditative techniques enjoined in the Shastras — among thousands of such qualified practitioners, only a few persist until the attainment of perfection (in yoga). Among the thousands who strive till the attainment of perfection, a very few only, knowing Me,

strive to attain success through Me [ie., through My Grace]. Among thousands of those who might know Me, one alone may know Me in reality, as I am. The point is: there is no one who is capable of knowing Me as I am. It will be declared later on:— 'It is very hard to find such a great person' (7.19), and 'But no one knows Me' (7.26).

bhūmir-āpo'nalo vāyuḥ khaṃ mano buddhir-eva ca |
ahaṅkāra itīyaṃ me bhinnā prakṛtir-aṣṭadhā || *4* ||

4. Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intellect and the principle of ego; thus My material nature [Prakṛti] is divided eightfold.

Commentary

"Prakṛti is the material cause of this universe, consisting of endless varieties of objects and means of enjoyment and places of enjoyment, is divided into eightfold substances; — all pertain to Krishna."

apareyamitastvanyāṃ prakṛtiṃ viddhi me parām |
jīvabhūtāṃ mahābāho yayedaṃ dhāryate jagat || *5* ||

5. This is My Inferior Nature [Prakṛti]. But, O mighty-armed One, know that My Superior Nature is different. It is the life-principle [Jīva-bhuta], by which this universe is sustained.

Commentary

The 'Higher Nature' is totally different from this inanimate material nature comprised of the objects of enjoyment for sentient beings. It is 'higher', because it is more pre-eminent compared to the insentient 'lower' nature. This higher Nature is the individual Self (Puruṣa) by which the whole inanimate material universe is sustained.

etad-yonīni bhūtāni sarvāṇītyupadhāraya |
ahaṃ kṛtsnasya jagataḥ prabhavaḥ pralayastathā || *6* ||

6. Know that all beings originate from these two. Therefore, I am the origin and the dissolution of the whole universe.

Commentary

All entities — from Brahma down to a tuft of grass, originate in these two Natures, which are consciousness (Puruṣa) and Matter (Prakṛti). Irrespective of whether they are existing in an evolved or less evolved form, the [dual] principle of consciousness and inanimate matter are combined together in all entities.

It is proven on the basis of the Vedas and Smrtis that the Supreme Being is the cause of these two Principles, Prakṛti and Puruṣa (matter and consciousness), which form the totality of all sentient and insentient beings. This is evident from texts like:—

'The Mahat resolves into Avyakta, Avyakta into Akṣara, Akṣara into Tamas, and Tamas merges with the Supreme Lord' (Subala Up., 2);

'O sage, distinct from the form of Vishnu, the Supreme Lord, the two forms, Prakṛti and Puruṣa, arise' (V.P., 1 .2.;24) ;

'What was described by Me as Prakṛti in its dual form of the manifest and the unmanifest, and the Puruṣa merge in the Supreme Self, and the Supreme Self is the support of all. He is the Supreme Lord named Vishnu, exalted in the Vedas and Vedanta' (V.P., 6.4;39 & 40).

mattaḥ parataraṃ nānyat kiñcid-asti dhanañjayaḥ |
mayi sarvam idaṃ protaṃ sūtre maṇi-gaṇā iva || 7 ||

7. There is nothing whatsoever higher than Me, O Arjuna. All this is strung on Me, as clusters of gems on a thread.

Commentary

"I am absolutely superior to all things in two ways:

(1) I am the cause of both the Natures (Prakṛtis) and I am also their Proprietor (śeṣin). The Jīvas exercise control over their bodies as they are the inner proprietors (śeṣin) and I am the Proprietor of all Jīvas.

(2) I am also the Supreme Being because I possess knowledge, untiring strength, sovereignty, immutability, creative power and splendour in an infinite degree.

The totality of all the sentient and insentient beings, whether in their [unmanifest] causal state or in their [manifest] state of effect, is strung on Me, who abide as their Self, as a cluster of gems on a thread — in other words they have their rest and support in Me."

And it is established that the entire Universe [of sentient and insentient entities] and Brahman (the Supreme Being) exist in the [symbiotic] relationship of body and spirit as declared by the Antaryami-Brahmana and other texts: —

'He whose body is the earth' (Br. Up., 3.7-3),

'He whose body is the Self' (Br. U. Madh., 3.7.22),

'He is the Over-Self of all beings, immaculate,

He is the Lord in the supreme heaven, He is the one Nārāyaṇa' (Sub.Up., 7).

Everything constitutes the "corporeality" and is an "expression" of the Supreme Being who is their Over-Self, thus the Supreme Being alone exists, and all [existing] things are only His modes [of expression]. Therefore all terms used in common parlance for different things denote Him only.

Sri Krishna illustrates this teaching by equating Himself with some important things.

raso'ham-apsu kaunteya prabhāsmi śaśi-sūryayo |
praṇavaḥ sarva vedeṣu śabdaḥ khe pauruṣaṃ nṛṣu || 8 ||

8. I am the sapidity in the water, O Arjuna! I am the radiance in the sun and the moon; the sacred syllable Om in all the Vedas; sound in the ether, and valour in men am I.

puṇyo gandhaḥ pṛthivyāṃ ca tejaścāsmi vibhāvasau |
jīvanaṃ sarva bhūteṣu tapaścāsmi tapasviṣu || 9 ||

9. I am the pure fragrance in the earth; I am the brilliance in the fire; I am the life-principle in all beings, and Inner Heat engendered by spiritual practitioners.

bījaṃ māṃ sarva bhūtānāṃ viddhi pārtha sanātanaṃ |
buddhir-buddhimatām asmi tejas-tejasvinām aham || 10 ||

10. Know Me, O Arjuna (son of Partha), to be the primeval seed of all beings. I am the intelligence of the discerning, and the brilliance of the brilliant.

balaṃ balavatāṃ cāhaṃ kāma-rāga vivarjitam |
dharmāviruddho bhūteṣu kāmo'smi bharatarṣabha || 11 ||

11. I am strength in the strong disassociated with craving and attachment. In all beings, I am that desire which is not contrary to Dharma, O Arjuna (Bull of the Bharatas),

ye caiva sāttvikā bhāvā rājasāstāmasāśca ye |
matta eveti tān-viddhi na tvahaṃ teṣu te mayi || 12 ||

12. Know that all those states of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas have their origin in Me alone. But I am not in them; they are in Me.

Commentary

Why indeed should this be declared with particular illustrations! The reason is as follows: — "All existing entities in the universe possesses the properties of Sattva (harmony), Rajas (activity) and Tamas (inertia) in the forms of their bodies, senses, objects of enjoyment and their causes — know them all to have originated from Me alone, and they abide in Me alone, as they constitute My 'corporeality'. I am not in them in so far as I do not depend on them for My existence at any time. In the case of sentient beings, though, the physical body depends for its existence on the Self. The Self in turn depends on the physical body for its embodiment. In My case, however, there is no need for any assistance in my "embodiment." They [all entities] merely serve the purpose of My Lila" [cosmic recreation] — this is the meaning.

tribhir-guṇa-mayair-bhāvair-ebhiḥ sarvam idaṃ jagat |
mohitaṃ nābhijānāti māmebhyaḥ param-avyayam || 13 ||

13. The entire universe is deluded by these three conditions originating from the Gunas, and fails to recognise Me, who am beyond them and immutable.

Commentary

"Now, in this way, the entire universe, consisting of sentient and insentient entities belongs to Me. From time to time it is projected by Me, abides in Me and is re-absorbed into Me alone. It constitutes My 'corporeality' and I am its Self, whether in the pre-manifestation state (causal) or in the state of manifestation (effect) all these entities are My various 'expressions'. I am superior to all these 'modes' or 'expressions', as I am their cause and proprietor. In every way I remain as the Supreme Being."

"This world constituted of gods, humans, animals and immovables, are deluded by the three Gunas and its evolutes, and are inferior and transient. All the bodies, senses and objects of enjoyment comprising the world of beings exist in accordance with their individual past Karmas. No one in the world knows Me who am the highest and the immutable Being."

How is it possible that all experiencing beings consider these inferior, transient objects made up of the Gunas to be a source of delight, while Krishna exists — He is of the nature of unbounded and abundant bliss, existing in an eternal unchanging form and is the [real] source of the agreeableness of even these material objects? Sri Krishna replies: —

daivī hyeṣā guṇamayī mama māyā duratyayā |
māmeva ye prapadyante māyāmetāṃ taranti te || 14 ||

14. For this divine Māya of Mine consisting of the three Gunas is hard to overcome. But those who take refuge in Me alone, shall be able to transcend this Māya.

Commentary

"This Māya [deluding potency of the cosmos] originates from Me, for the purpose of recreation, it is by nature divine and therefore difficult to overcome."

The word Māya is used to describe the effects of the three Gunas, because it has the

power to generate amazing effects like the magical tricks of Asuras and Rakshasas. Take for example the passage: —

> 'Then the excellent discus, the flaming Sudarshana, was despatched by the Lord to defend the boy [Prahlada]. The thousand Māyas or wonderfully created weapons of the evil-minded Sambara were foiled one after another, by that quickly moving discus, for protecting the body of the boy' (V.P., 1.19.19-20)

Here the term Māya does not convey the sense of 'false'. Even in the case of magicians, who are called Māyavin (those who possess Māya). With the aid of certain incantations, drugs etc., they can produce illusory objects but the perceptions of those objects are actually real. The term 'Māya' refers to the incantations, drugs etc. which have the power of creating real impressions. Because [grammatically speaking] the meaning of a word, should be the same in all contexts – the term 'Māya' can be applied to the illusory objects that are produced, only in a secondary sense. Its primary sense is in regard to the 'real impressions' created in the mind. It is just like in the statement 'The platform groans.' (a figurative expression having reference to the sound that is produced)

The Māya of the Lord consisting of the three Gunas is existentially real and is specifically taught in texts like:—

> 'Know then Māya to be the Prakṛti and the possessor of the Māya to be the great Lord' (Sve.Up., 4.10).

Māya not only obscures the essential nature of the Lord but also creates the condition of the mind that sees the created objects as enjoyable. Therefore, the entire universe, deluded by the Lord's Māya, does not know the Lord of boundless bliss.

Sri Krishna teaches the way of deliverance from Māya is to take refuge in Him. Why then, does everyone not take recourse to seeking refuge in the Lord which leads to devotion?

na māṃ duṣkṛtino mūḍhāḥ prapadyante narādhamāḥ |
māyayāpahṛta jñānā āsuraṃ bhāvam āśritāḥ || *15* ||

15. The malefactors, the foolish, the lowest of people, those persons deprived of wisdom by delusion (Māya) and those who are dominated by demoniac nature they do not seek refuge in Me.

Commentary

'malefactors', (*duṣkṛtina*) those who act in a wrongful manner and do not seek refuge, they are of four types, according to the degree of their immoral deeds:—

'The foolish' (*mūḍhah*) are those who are confused. Right Knowledge consists in understanding that the Self is dependent on the Lord and exists for Him. But 'the foolish' think they are independent and also that all enjoyable things of the world are their own and exist for their personal enjoyment.

'The lowest of people' (*narādhamāḥ*) are those who are incapable of turning towards Krishna, even though they have a general knowledge of His essential nature.

'Persons who are deprived of insight by Māya' (*Māyayā'pahrta-jñāna*) are those who know about Krishna and His manifestations, but due to deceitful reasoning they contend that such teachings are inconsistent and impossible.

'Those of demoniac nature' (*āsuram*) are those who have definitive knowledge about Krishna and His manifestations but hate Him.

The intensity of sinfulness increases in these types in the order in which they are successively placed.

catur-vidhā bhajante māṃ janāḥ sukṛtino'rjuna |
ārto jijñāsur arthārthī jñānī ca bharatarṣabha || *16* ||

16. Four types of benefactors worship Me, O Arjuna (Bull of the Bharatas). These are the distressed, the seekers after knowledge, the ambitious, and the wise.

Commentary

'Benefactors' — people of good deeds, are those who have meritorious Karmas to their credit, and who take refuge and worship Krishna alone. They too are divided into four categories according to the degree of their good deeds, each subsequent type being better than the preceding, because of the [increasing] positivity of their good deeds and their knowledge.

- *The distressed* — are those who have lost status and prosperity, and who wish to regain them.
- *The ambitious* — are those who aspire for prosperity which they have never had. Between them the difference is only nominal, as both of them seek prosperity alone.
- *The seekers after knowledge* — are those one who wish to know the real nature of the Self [in its pure state] as an entity different from the Prakṛti. They are called 'the seekers after knowledge,' because consciousness alone is the essential nature of the Self.
- *The wise* — are those who know that the essential nature of the Self is to find happiness only in the acceptance of being the shesha (dependant) of the Lord, as taught in the verse 7:5. The wise are not satisfied with the knowledge that the Self is different from Material Nature, but desire to attain the Lord — considering that the Lord alone is the highest goal.

teṣāṃ jñānī nitya-yukta eka bhaktir-viśiṣyate |
priyo hi jñānino'tyartham ahaṃ sa ca mama priyaḥ || 17 ||

17. Of these, the wise, being ever steadfast and devoted to the One only, is the foremost; for I am inexpressibly dear to the wise and he too is dear to Me.

Commentary

Of these four, 'the wise' is the foremost. Why? Because of being constantly attached to Krishna and being single-minded in devotion to Him alone. The wise person has only one goal, that is to attain Krishna, the focussed devotion being the unifying force. As for the others, they are mindful of Krishna only until the fulfilment of their desires. Their only goal is the attainment of their cherished objects, and devotion is seen as a means to that end. Hence the wise alone is the foremost.

Here in the expression 'athyartham' (inexpressibly), the term 'artha' denotes that which cannot be adequately expressed. That is, even Krishna the omniscient and omnipotent, is unable to express the degree of love between Himself and the jñanin, since there is no such limit to this love — such is the meaning. As in the case of Prahlada, the foremost among the wise, it is said: —

> 'But he, with thoughts firmly fixed on Krishna while being bitten by the great serpents, felt no pain from the wounds, being immersed in rapturous mindfulness of Him (V.P. 1.17.39).

udārāḥ sarva evaitaṃ jñānī tvātmaiva me matam |
āsthitaḥ sa hi yuktātmā māmevānuttamāṃ gatim || 18 ||

18. Noble indeed, are all these, but I deem the wise to be My very Self; for he, being fully integrated, is devoted exclusively to Me as the highest goal.

Commentary

"Because they worship Me alone, all these are noble i.e, magnanimous. For, those who accept anything from Me, however small, I consider them as contributing everything to Me [and thus as My benefactors]. But I consider the wise to be My very Self — I consider Myself to be dependent on the wise for My support. How come? Because the wise consider Me to be the highest and find it impossible to support themselves without Me; I also find it impossible to be without them."

bahūnāṃ janmanām ante jñānavān māṃ prapadyate |
vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti sa mahātmā sudurlabhaḥ || *19* ||

19. At the end of many births, the enlightened one takes refuge in Me, realising that 'Vasudeva is everything'— It is very hard to find such a great-person.

Commentary

This is the ultimate achievement of innumerable good births — namely taking refuge in Krishna. After passing through countless good births, one obtains the insight:— "I find my ultimate joy in being a dependant (shesha) of Vasudeva. I am such that my essence, existence and activities are completely under His control. He is superior to all others because of His innumerable auspicious attributes." After realising this, one takes refuge in Krishna, ie., meditates on Him, with the understanding —

"Vasudeva alone is my highest goal and also the means for attaining it, and whatever other desire remains in my mind, He alone, is all that for me too."

For the Refutation of the doctrine of Identity of the ātman with Brahman please see appendix.

kāmais tais tair hṛta-jñānāḥ prapadyante'nya-devatāḥ |
taṃ taṃ niyamam āsthāya prakṛtyā niyatāḥ svayā || *20* ||

20. Controlled by their inherent nature, and deprived of insight by various desires, the worldly-minded resort to other gods, observing various disciplines.

Commentary

Everyone is conditioned by their own nature which is comprised of the psychological tendencies (*vāsanas*) resulting from an involvement with material nature. Their insight into the Divine Nature is blurred by various desires (*kāmas*) which are conditioned by the subliminal activators (*saṃskāras*) created by their previous actions (karmas), in accordance with the three Gunas. In order to fulfill these various kinds of desires they take refuge in, that is, resort to and worship other deities who are regarded as different from Krishna, such as Indra and others, doing spiritual exercises which are meant to propitiate these deities.

yo yo yāṃ yāṃ tanuṃ bhaktaḥ śraddhayārcitum icchati |
tasya tasyācalāṃ śraddhāṃ tām-eva vidadhāmy-ahaṃ || *21* ||

21. Whichever manifestation (of the Divine) any devotee desires to worship with faith — that faith I make unshakeable and firm.

Commentary

These divinities too are Krishna's manifestations as taught in the Vedic texts.

"Although an individual may choose to worship some deity such as the Sun with faith, unaware that all deities are My manifestations, I understand that he is worshipping Me alone, and therefore I make his faith firm and unflinching, that is, free from hindrances."

sa tayā śraddhayā yuktas tasyārādhanam īhate |
labhate ca tataḥ kāmān mayaiva vihitān hi tān || *22* ||

22. Endowed with that faith, one engages in the worship of that [particular] manifestation and thence obtains the desired objects, which are in fact bestowed by Me alone.

antavattu phalaṃ teṣāṃ tad bhavaty-alpa medhasām |
devān devayajo yānti mad-bhaktā yānti mām api || 23 ||

23. But verily the reward gained by these persons of limited understanding is finite. The worshippers of the gods will go to the gods but My devotees will come to Me.

Commentary

"The results obtained by their worship is trivial and limited. Why? The devotees of devas like Indra go to them; and Indra and other devas possess limited joy and are conditioned by time and space. So if they attain equality of enjoyment with them, they also fall down along with them in due course. But My devotees, fully mindful of the fact that all their acts are being done as worship of Me, renouncing attachment for finite rewards, and acting in order to please Me alone, reach Me. That is, they never again return to the cycle of transmigration [Samsara].

avyaktaṃ vyaktim āpannaṃ manyante mām abuddhayaḥ |
paraṃ bhāvam ajānanto mamāvyayam anuttamam || 24 ||

24. Not knowing My higher nature, immutable and unsurpassed, the ignorant think of Me as an unmanifest entity who has now become manifest.

Commentary

Ignorant people do not know that it is Krishna, who is the ultimate receiver of all worship. That He who is the Lord of all, and whose nature is incomprehensible and inexpressible, has incarnated in human form without compromising His Divinity, out of consummate compassion and solicitous love for all beings to be a source of refuge for all. They consider Me as only a worldly prince who has just now born due Karma and has secured a special form. Therefore, they do not take refuge in Me, nor do they worship Me.

nāhaṃ prakāśaḥ sarvasya yoga māyā samāvṛtaḥ |
mūḍho'yaṃ nābhijānanti loko mām ajam avyayam || 25 ||

25. Veiled by Māya, I am not clearly evident to all. This deluded world does not recognise Me as the unborn and immutable.

Commentary

"Concealed by the deluding potency (*Māya*) called 'Yoga' ('union' or association with material nature), I am associated with a human form and other generic structures which are characteristic of individual Selves. Because of this, My true nature is not apparent to all. The foolish, by seeing merely the human or the other generic structures that I have adopted, do not know that My powers are greater than those of Vāyu and Indra, that My lustre is more brilliant than that of sun and fire, that though [presently] visible to all, I am unborn, unchangeable, the cause of all the worlds, the Lord of all, and that I have assumed a human form, so that all those who want to, can take refuge in Me."

vedāhaṃ samatītāni vartamānāni cārjuna |
bhaviṣyāṇi ca bhūtāni māṃ tu veda na kaścana || 26 ||

26. I know all beings, O Arjuna, that have been in the past, those now in the present and those yet to come; but no one knows Me.

icchā-dveṣa samutthena dvandva mohena bhārata |
sarva bhūtāni saṃmohaṃ sarge yānti paraṅtapa || 27 ||

27. By the phantasm of the pairs of opposites arising from desire and aversion, O Arjuna, all beings are subject to delusion as soon as they are born.

Commentary

Desire for pleasure and aversion from suffering is the dichotomy caused by the Gunas. They have their origin in the experiences of previous births. These experiences create subtle impressions (samskāras) in the mind and manifest again, in every succeeding birth as an instinctive attraction and aversion towards those similar objects. These mental habitual tendencies (vāsanas) are a delusive force acting from the very moment of birth. One develops an inherent fondness or aversion for specific [material] things, instead of feeling joy in communion with Krishna and misery at separation from Him — as does the wise.

yeṣāṃ tvanta-gataṃ pāpaṃ janānāṃ puṇya-karmaṇām |
te dvandva-moha-nirmuktā bhajante māṃ dṛḍha-vratāḥ || 28 ||

28. But the doers of virtuous deeds, whose sins have ceased, are freed from the delusion of the pairs of opposites. They worship Me, steadfast in their determination.

Commentary

However, there are some people whose demerit which has accrued from beginingless time, and which causes an attraction or aversion to the pairs of opposites and which hinders the development of devotion, has come to an end, ie., has become attenuated through the accumulation of merit in numerous births. They take refuge in Krishna, and freed from the delusion produced by the Gunas, they worship Krishna alone in proportion to the excellence of their Karma (accumulation of merit) previously described. In order to attain deliverance from old age and death and for acquiring the ultimate goal of reaching Him, they remain steadfast in their vows; that is — they remain determined.

jarā-maraṇa-mokṣayā mām-āśritya yatanti ye |
te brahma tad viduḥ kṛtsnam adhyātmaṃ karma cākhilam || 29||

29. Those who take refuge in Me and strive for liberation from old age and death, fully understand Brahman [ātman], Self-realisation, and Karma.

Commentary

Brahman is the Self in it's immaculate and essential state.

Self-realisation is freedom from the identification with Material Nature — Prakṛti.

Karma are those activities leading to rebirth.

sādhibhūtādhidaivaṃ māṃ sādhi yajñāṃ ca ye viduḥ |
prayāṇa kāle'pi ca māṃ te vidur yukta cetasaḥ || 30 ||

30. And those who know Me associated with the Adhibuta, Adhidaiva and the Adhiyajña, they too, with their minds fixed in meditation, know Me even at the hour of death.

Commentary

Here, other practitioners distinct from those already mentioned in the previous verse are to be understood, because of the repetition of the term 'those' (ye).

The declaration — *"those who know Me as being associated with the higher material*

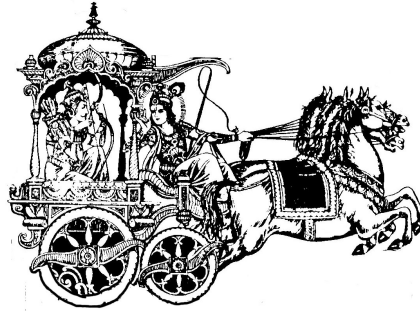
entities' (*adhibhūta*) and '*with that which is superior to the gods'* (*adhidaiva*) that is, the ātman in its sovereignty "— appears to be a repetition, but it is really an injunction, because there is no other way of understanding it.

The statement of knowing Krishna as being '*connected with the sacrifice'* (*adhiyajña*) is also a clear injunction directed at all the three classes of spiritual aspirants (1. the distressed, 2. the ambitious and 3. the seekers of knowledge) without any exception, because of the perpetual nature of the subject (ie. the sacrifice). None of these three types of aspirants should ever give up the performance of the Five Great Sacrifices (pañca-mahā-yajña) as well as the daily and periodical ritual obligations.

'They will realise Me also at the hour of death' — in a way corresponding with their desired objectives.

Because of the use of the term '*ca'* (too) in 'they too' — those who have been mentioned before in the previous verse as *'striving for release from old age and death'* are also included among those knowing Krishna at the hour of death. By this it may be understood that even the wise (Jñanin) know Krishna as associated with the sacrifice on account of the subject under discussion (ie., sacrifice).

hariḥ oṃ tatsat
iti śrīmad bhagavadgītāsupaniṣatsu
brahma-vidyāyāṃ yogaśāstre śrī kṛṣṇārjuna saṃvāde
jñāna vijñāna yoga nāma
saptamo'dhyāyaḥ

Thus in the Upanishads of the Glorious Bhagavad Gita
The science of the Eternal, the Scripture of Yoga
The dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna
Ends the seventh discourse entitled
"Communion through Knowledge & Realisation"

Chapter 8

Tāraka Brahma Yogaḥ

The Way to the Immutable Brahman

Summary of the Teaching

In the seventh chapter, Sri Krishna taught that [He Himself as] Vāsudeva, the Supreme Brahman, is the object of meditation and that He is the ruler and the proprietor of all things, animate and animate. He explained how He is the cause [of all things], how He is the support of everything; how He is denoted by all words on account of all beings being His 'corporeality' or 'modes of expression'. He taught how He is the controller of all; and how He alone is supreme over all on account of His multitude of auspicious attributes. He also taught how He is obscured by Sattva, Rajas and Tamas in the form of bodies and senses and as the objects of experience arising from the stream of negative Karma from beginingless time. He also taught how this obscuration can be removed by taking refuge in Him, and through the performance of virtuous deeds. He also taught the gradation among the practitioners based upon their personal goals which are generated by the relative proportions of accumulated merit; these goals being material prosperity, self-knowledge and the attainment of God. He extolled the greatness of the aspirant who seeks attainment of God with single-minded devotion on account of His inexpressible love for such a devotee. He referred to the rarity of such a devotee and also mentioned the differences among the things that should be known and those that should be practiced by the three classes of aspirants.

Now, in the eighth chapter Sri Krishna gives a detailed description of certain principles and practices that have already been treated in brief earlier:—

Arjuna uvāca

kiṃ tad-brahma kim-adhyātma kiṃ karma puruṣottama ǀ
adhi-bhūtaṃ ca kiṃ proktam adhi-daivaṃ kim-ucyate ǀǀ *1* ǀǀ

Arjuna said:
1. What is that *Brahman* (Ultimate Reality)? What is *Adhyātma* (that which is associated with the Self) ? What is *Karma* (action)? What is said to be *Adhibhūta* (pertaining to matter) ? O Supreme Being, who is said to be *Adhidaiva* (pertaining to the gods)?

adhi-yajñāḥ kathaṃ ko'tra dehe'smin madhusūdana ǀ
prayāṇa-kāle ca kathaṃ jñeyo'si niyatātmabhiḥ ǀǀ 2 ǀǀ

2. Who is Adhiyajña (principle of sacrifice) in this body, and how is He the Adhiyajña, O Krishna? And how are You to be known at the time of death by the self-controlled?

Commentary

What is said to be *Adhibhūta* — "What are the superior material objects?",

Who is said to be *Adhidaiva* — "Who is the Being who is superior to the gods who should be known by those who aspire for prosperity?"

Who is *Adhiyajña* — "Who is denoted by the word *Adhi-yajña* (principle of sacrifice)?

How is He the *Adhiyajña* — "And how does the state of *Adhi-yajña* arise?"

śrī bhagavān uvāca

akṣaraṃ brahma paramaṃ svabhāvo'dhyātmam-ucyate |
bhūta-bhāvodbhava-karo visargaḥ karma-saṃjñitaḥ || 3 ||

The Blessed Lord said;
3. The Brahman is the supreme, indestructible Self (*akṣara*). One's own material nature (*svabhāva*) is said to be that which dwells with the Self. The externalised creative force which gives rise to material entities is known as Karma.

Commentary

That which is the Supreme and Imperishable (*akṣara*) has been called '*that Brahman*'. The *akṣara* is that which cannot be destroyed and forms the totality of all individual Selves.

The Vedas (Sub.Up., 2,) state: —

> 'The Unmanifest (*avyakta*) is absorbed into the Imperishable (*akṣara*),
> the Imperishable (*akṣara*) is absorbed into Source (*Tamas*)'

The essential nature of the Jīva, disjoined from Prakrti is the supreme imperishable state (*akṣara*). One's own material nature (*svabhāva*) is that which is spoken of as Adhyātma — that which is associated with the Jīva. This nature (*svabhāva*) is material. It does not constitute the Jīva but attaches itself to the Jīva in the form of subtle elements [of the body], & impressions [of the mind] etc. This has been taught in the 'Doctrine of the Five Fires' (Chan. Up., 5). Both these (doctrines of the *akṣara* — the quintessential state, and the *adhyātma* — conjunction with material nature) should be learnt by the aspirants for liberation (*Kaivalya-Moksha*) — the former doctrine [regarding the quintessence of the Jīva] is what should be realised and the latter doctrine [the conjunction with material nature] is what should be overcome.

Karma is that force which produces all mundane beings. 'Beings' here means entities such as humans and animals. The creative force which produces them is sexual intercourse. That procreative force is here called 'Karma'. All the acts associated with procreation should be assiduously avoided by aspirants after Moksha. This abstention will also be taught immediately in the verse, 'Desiring which they practice the vow of celibacy' (8.11).

adhibhūtaṃ kṣaro bhāvaḥ puruṣaś-cādhidaivataṃ |
adhiyajño'hamevātra dehe deha-bhṛtāṃ vara || 4 ||

4. *Adhibhūta* (pertaining to matter) are those perishable things, O best of the embodied beings; the *Adhidaivata* (that which is superior to the gods) is the *Puruṣa* (individual Self). I Myself am the *Adhiyajña* (Principle of Sacrifice), here in this body.

Commentary

Adhidaivata connotes the individual Jīvātma which is superior to the gods like Indra, Prajāpati and other divinities. The Jīva is the experiencer of sound and the other sense pleasures, which originate from Indra, Prajāpati and the other gods. The seekers after prosperity and power should contemplate upon this state of being such an (absolute) enjoyer, as the end to be attained. But these higher material goals of wealth, power, etc., are all [still] impermanent.

"*Adhiyajña* denotes one who is propitiated in sacrifices. Indra and others, to whom sacrifices are offered, are My manifestations. I dwell in them as their inner Self and I alone am the goal of sacrifice. The three groups of qualified aspirants should contemplate in this manner at the time of the performance of daily (*nitya*) and periodical (*naimittika*) rituals such as the Five Great Sacrifices (*pañca mahā yajña*)."

antakāle ca mām-eva smaran-muktvā kalevaram |
yaḥ prayāti sa mad-bhāvaṃ yāti nāsty-atra saṃśayaḥ || *5* ||

5. And the one who, at the last moment, while leaving the body, departs, contemplating upon Me alone, attains My being; of this, there is no doubt.

Commentary

In other words, in whatever way one meditates on Me, one attains that very form, in the same manner as the royal sage Bharata attained the form of the deer remembered by him at moment of death. Such is the meaning.

Sri Krishna further elucidates that it is the nature of one's last thought that leads to the attainment of a similar form by the meditator:—

yaṃ yaṃ vāpi smaran-bhāvaṃ tyajaty-ante kalevaram |
taṃ tam-evaiti kaunteya sadā tad-bhāva-bhāvitaḥ || *6* ||

6. Whatsoever concept (bhāvam) one thinks of while leaving the body at the end, to that alone one attains, O Arjuna, having ever been in the contemplation thereof.

Commentary

The thought that occupies the mind while dying, is that which determines the state attained after death. The final thought arises only with reference to objects [and experiences] that were previously the most frequently contemplated upon during one's life.

tasmāt sarveṣu kāleṣu mām-anusmara yudhya ca |
mayyarpita mano-buddhir-mām evaiṣyasy-asaṃśayaḥ || *7* ||

7. Therefore, ever mindful of Me at all times, fight; with your mind and intellect dedicated to Me, you shall surely come to Me, there is no doubt.

Commentary

"Because the last thought arises only in regard to matters previously contemplated upon, therefore at all times until you die, day after day, be continuously mindful of Me. Engage yourself in actions appropriate to your station and stage in life, which would make you mindful of Me."

"These actions are prescribed by the Śrutis (Vedas) and Smrtis (Legal Codes) and comprise the obligatory (*nitya*) and periodic (*naimittika*) duties. Thus, by means of mindfulness (*anusmaraṇa*); with your mind and intellect focused on Me, you will recall Me at the time of death and thus attain Me in the manner you desire."

Thus, having laid down the general principle that the attainment of one's goal is dependent on one's last thought, Sri Krishna proceeds to describe different modes of contemplation (*upāsana*) to be practiced by the three groups of aspirants for acquiring their objectives. The first is the seeker of *aiśvarya* (power & prosperity in a divine realm.)

abhyāsa-yoga-yuktena cetasā nānya-gāminā |
paramaṃ puruṣaṃ divyaṃ yāti pārthānucintayan || *8* ||

8. Constantly meditating with a mind made steadfast by habitual practice, without thinking of anything else, one reaches the Divine Supreme Being, O Arjuna!

Commentary

Abhyāsa (habitual practice) is the training of the mind to be steadily focused on the object of meditation at all times without omitting the performance of one's daily duties.

Yoga is the meditation practiced every day at the time most suitable for practice [in the evening].

kaviṃ purāṇam anuśāsitāram aṇoraṇīyāṃsam anusmared yaḥ |
sarvasya dhātāram acintya-rūpam āditya varṇaṃ tamasaḥ parastāt || *9* ||

9. One who meditates upon the Omniscient, Primeval One, Ruler and Creator of all, who is more subtle than an atom, whose nature is inconceivable, who is as refulgent as the sun, and who is beyond *Tamas* (primordial state of undifferentiated matter) —

prayāṇa-kāle manasācalena bhaktyā yukto yoga-balena caiva |
bhāvor-madhye prāṇam-āveśya samyak sa taṃ paraṃ puruṣam upaiti divyam || *10* ||

10. — at the time of death, with a mind unwavering by the power of Yoga, being possessed of devotion, having focused the Vital Force (*Prāṇa*) between the eyebrows — reaches that same Divine Supreme Being.

Commentary

One who focuses the Vital-Force [on the ajña cakra] between the eyebrows at the time of death with a mind made steady through [mental] purification achieved by the perpetual practice of Yoga together with Devotion (Bhakti); and who contemplates on the Kavi — 'the One who knows everything', *Purāṇam* — the 'Primeval One', i.e., One who has always existed; *anuśāsitāram* — 'the Ruler', i.e., 'the One who governs the universe'; *anoraniyan* — 'One who is more subtle than the most subtle', ie., One who is more subtle than the individual Self; *Dhataram* — 'the creator of all'; *acintya-rūpam* — 'whose nature is inconceivable', ie., whose nature is different to everything else [that can be known], *āditya-varṇam tamasaḥ-parastāt* — 'who is as brilliant as the Sun and beyond darkness', i.e., who possesses a unique divine form — one who meditates on the Divine Being described thus, focusing the mind between the eyebrows, attains Him alone. One attains His state and receives power and glory similar to His — such is the meaning.

Next Sri Krishna describes the method of meditation to be adopted by the seeker of Kaivalya (ie., a state of Self-realisation in contrast to one whose object is God-realisation).

yad-akṣaraṃ deva-vido vadanti viśanti yad-yatayo vītarāgāḥ |
yad-icchanto brahmacaryaṃ carantitat-te padaṃ saṅgraheṇa pravakṣye || *11* ||

11. I shall declare to you briefly that goal, which the knowers of the Veda call the Imperishable, which ascetics, free from desire enter, and for attaining which, they practice the vow of continence (Brahmacarya).

Commentary

That which is the focus [of contemplation] is here called padam — the 'goal'. "I shall reveal to you briefly My essential nature which is actually indescribable and which is alluded to in the Vedānta and which is to be meditated upon" — such is the meaning.

sarva-dvārāṇi saṃyamya mano hṛdi nirudhya ca |
mūrdhny-ādhāyātmanaḥ prāṇam-āsthito yoga-dhāraṇam || *12* ||

12. Having restrained all the gates [of the senses], focusing the mind within the heart, fixing the vital force within the head, engaged in the practice of steady concentration;

om-ity-ekākṣaraṃ brahma vyāharan mām-anusmaran |
yaḥ prayāti tyajan-dehaṃ sa yāti paramāṃ gatim || *13* ||

13. uttering the sacred syllable 'Om' which denotes the Absolute (Brahman), thinking of Me constantly — one who abandons the body and departs thus, reaches the supreme goal.

Commentary

One should subdue all the senses which constitute the doorways for sense impressions, in other words, withdrawing them from their natural functions and focusing the mind on Krishna, the imperishable One seated within the lotus of the heart; practising steady concentration of mind (*Dhārana*). Uttering the sacred syllable AUM and fixing the vital force (*prāṇa*) within the [crown of the] head (*sahasrāra cakra*) — whosoever abandons the body and departs in this way reaches the highest state. One attains the pure state of the Self liberated from Material Nature, which is of a similar state to Krishna's own (*sārūpya*). From that state there is no return — such is the meaning. Later on Sri Krishna will clarify this point:—

> "They describe that as the highest goal of the ātman, which is not destroyed when all things are destroyed, which is unmanifest and imperishable." (8.20-21).

Thus, the method of contemplation on the Lord by the aspirants after sovereignty (*aiśvarya*) and Self-realisation (*kaivalya*) have been taught according to their respective goals. Now, Sri Krishna teaches the way of meditation by the Jñanin.

ananya-cetāḥ satataṃ yo māṃ smarati nityaśaḥ ।
tasyāhaṃ sulabhaḥ pārtha nitya-yuktasya yoginaḥ ॥ *14* ॥

14. I am easily attainable by that ever steadfast Yogi, O Partha, who constantly and daily is mindful of Me, not thinking of anything else.

Commentary

Not thinking of anything else — continuously; that is (*nityaśaḥ*) at the time of meditation and also during all other times (*satatam*). "He does not desire to share My attributes like sovereignty, power, etc., but I alone am his goal of attainment because of profound love and devotion. Unable to bear the separation, I Myself grant him the capacity to attain full maturity in the devotional practice necessary for attaining Me — namely, the annulment of all obstacles and the establishment of the state of mind that reinforces the bond of love between us."

The Veda also says:—

> 'He whom this (Self) chooses, by him alone He can be obtained' (Mun.Up., 3.2.3 and Ka.Up., 2.22).

And Sri Krishna Himself will later teach:—

> "To those, who desire eternal union with Me and who worship Me, I bestow that discernment by which they come to Me. Out of compassion for them, I, abiding in their heart, dispel the darkness born of ignorance, by the brilliant lamp of knowledge." (10;10 — 11).

In the remaining part of this chapter, Krishna teaches that the Jñānis and the aspirants after Kaivalya (Self-realisation) do not return [to re-birth], and that the seekers after power and wealth (*aiśvarya*) do return.

mām-upetya punar-janma duḥkh-ālayam aśāśvatam ।
nāpnuvanti mahātmanaḥ saṃsiddhiṃ paramāṃ gatāḥ ॥ *15* ॥

15. Having attained Me, great ones are never again subject to rebirth in this world which is transient and the abode of sorrow — they have found the highest perfection.

Commentary

Rebirth, in an embodied condition is a state of impermanence and a source of suffering. These noble-minded ones, who seek and worship Krishna as the supreme goal, with

profound attachment and complete dependence on Him, attain Him.

Sri Krishna next teaches the reason for the return to Samsāra (cycle of rebirth) of those who aspire for power & wealth (aiśvarya) and for the non-return to Samsāra of those who have reached Him: —

ābrahma bhuvanāllokāḥ punar-āvartino'rjuna |
mām-upetya tu kaunteya punar-janma na vidyate || 16 ||

16. All the worlds, from the realm of Brahma down, are subject to return, O Arjuna, but after attaining Me, O Son of Kunti, there is no rebirth.

Commentary

"All the realms of the universe, from the realm of Brahma downwards are spheres in which enjoyment and power are experienced, but they are all impermanent, and those who attain them are [eventually] subjected to rebirth. Therefore return is unavoidable for those who aspire for [spiritual] enjoyment (bhoga) and power (aiśvarya), as the realms in which these things are attained are transient. On the other hand, there is no rebirth to those who attain Me.

Sri Krishna now clarifies the Divine time-frame determined in regard to the evolution and dissolution of the realms of existence including the realm of Brahma and those who are within them.

sahasra-yuga-paryantam aharyad brahmaṇo viduḥ |
rātriṃ yuga sahasrāntāṃ te'horātra-vido janāḥ || 17 ||

17. Those who know the duration of the [Cosmic] day and night understand a day of Brahma to last for a thousand Yugas and a night of Brahma to last for another thousand Yugas.

Commentary

Those who know the Divinely established order of Cosmic Time which affects all beings from humankind to Lord Brahma, understand that Lord Brahma's day is comprised of a unit period of one thousand four Yuga cycles and a night is a unit of equal duration.

Catur Yuga — Tetrad of Ages

Kali Yuga — 432,000 human years
Dvāpara Yuga — 864,000
Treta Yuga — 1,296,000
Krta Yuga — 1,728,000

1 tetrad of Yugas = 1 Mahā Yuga = 4,320,000 human years.
71 Mahā Yugas = 1 Manvantara = 308,448,000 human years
14 Manvantaras = 1 Kalpa = 4,320,000,000 human years
2 Kalpas = one day and night of Brahma = 8,640,000,000 human years
360 Brahma days = 1 Brahma year = 3,110,400,000,000 human years
100 such years = 1 lifetime of Brahma = 311,040,000,000,000 human years

avyaktād-vyaktayaḥ sarvāḥ prabhavanty-ahar-āgame |
ratry-āgame pralīyante tatraivāvyakta saṃjñake || 18 ||

18. All the manifested entities come forth from the unmanifest (*Avyakta*) at the coming of the day of Brahma, at the coming of the night they are dissolved into that alone which is known as the Unmanifest.

Commentary

Thus, at the dawn of a 'day of Brahma', all the entities existing in all the three realms [physical, astral and transcendental], possessing physical manifestations, senses, objects and places of enjoyment, appear from the Unmanifest state (*Avyakta*), which is the ontological condition of Brahma at that time, and at the beginning of the night they are dissolved back into the condition of the Unmanifest.

bhūta-grāmaḥ sa evāyaṃ bhūtvā bhūtvā pralīyate |
ratry-āgame'vaśaḥ pārtha prabhavaty-ahar-āgame || *19* ||

19. The same multitude of beings comes forth again and again irresistibly, and is withdrawn at the coming of the night. Once again it comes forth at the coming of the day.

Commentary

The same array of beings, under the sway Karma, is projected at the coming of the cosmic day and is withdrawn at the coming of night. This process continues to repeat itself over and over again. Similarly, at the end of the life span of Brahma which consists of a hundred years of three hundred and sixty days each (311,040,000,000,000 human years) all the worlds including that of Brahma and even Brahma himself are absorbed into Nārāyaṇa in accordance with the order thus described in the Veda: —

'The earth is dissolved into the waters, the waters are dissolved into light' etc., (Su. Up., 2).

The process of involution terminates after passing through all the other stages of dissolution, ending with the Avyakta, Akṣara and Tamas. Therefore, for every other entity except Krishna, origination and annihilation are unavoidable. So for those who seek Aiśvarya (prosperity and power) birth and dissolution according to the above mentioned time scheme are unavoidable. But in the case of those who attain Krishna, there is no return again to Samsāra. Now Sri Krishna again states that there is no return to Samsāra even for those who have attained Kaivalya (self-realisation or isolation):—

paras-tasmāt tu bhavo'nyo'vyakto'vyaktāt-sanātanaḥ |
yaḥ sa sarveṣu bhūteṣu naśyatsu na vinaśyati || *20* ||

20. There is, however, another Unmanifest Being superior to this unmanifest phase, which is eternal and does not pass away when all entities pass away.

avyakto'kṣara ity-uktas-tamāhuḥ paramāṃ gatim |
yaṃ prāpya na nivartante tad-dhāma paramaṃ mama || *21* ||

21. This has [also] been called the Unmanifest (*Avyakta*) and Imperishable (*Akṣara*). This, is said to be the highest goal; My ultimate state, reaching which Jīvas do not return to Samsāra.

Commentary

The *'inferior Unmanifest'* entity is the insentient Material Nature (Prakrti) in which beings are totally entangled. The *'Superior Unmanifest'* is the *Avyakta* which is comprised of consciousness and is also non-apparent. It is the Self — ātman (puruṣa). It is unmanifest (non-apparent) because it cannot be conclusively demonstrated by any of the three means of knowing (perception, inference or testimony). In other words its nature is unique and it can be known comprehensively only by and of itself. It can be explained only vaguely by ordinary terms of reference. It is eternal because it is not subject to origination and annihilation.

This, is said to be the highest goal; — the Jīva in it's essential pristine state unassociated

with material nature is declared to be the supreme goal. Once the Jīva attains this essential state, it does not return to Samsāra — this is the highest sphere of Krishna's dominion.

In other words; the insentient Material Nature (Prakrti) is the first sphere of Krishna's dominion. The sentient Jīva conjoined with this Material nature is the second sphere of Krishna's dominion and control. The pristine state of the liberated Jīva, free from association with Nature, is the highest sphere of Krishna's dominion — such is the meaning. This state is also one of non-return to Samsāra.

On the other hand the term '*Dhāma'* may be interpreted as 'light'. Luminosity indicates knowledge or consciousness — the essential nature of the liberated Self is boundless consciousness, or supreme light, which stands in contrast to the contracted consciousness of the Self, when conditioned by Material Nature.

Sri Krishna now teaches that the objective of the enlightened one (*Jñanin*), is totally different from this: —

puruṣaḥ sa paraḥ pārtha bhaktyā labhyas-tv-ananyayā |
yasyāntaḥ sthāni bhūtāni yena sarvam idaṃ tatam || 22 ||

22. But the Supreme Being in whom all beings abide and by whom all this [universe] is pervaded is to be attained by unswerving devotion, O Arjuna.

For the Doctrine of The Path of Light or The Teaching on the Five Fires please see the appendix.

yatra kāle tvanāvṛttim āvṛttiṃ caiva yoginaḥ |
prayātā yānti taṃ kālaṃ vakṣyāmi bharatarṣabha || 23 ||

23. Now, I declare to you the time departing at which, the Yogis do not return and also the time, departing in which, they return, O Bull of the Bharatas.

agnir-jyotir-ahaḥ śuklaḥ ṣaṇmāsā uttarāyaṇam |
tatra prayātā gacchanti brahma brahma-vido janāḥ || 24 ||

24. Light in the form of fire, the day, the bright fortnight, the six months of the northern course of the sun — the knowers of Brahman who take this path go to the Brahman.

Commentary

Here, the term 'time' is used in the sense of a path, having many presiding deities beginning with day and ending with year. Fire and light are the deities who preside over divisions of time. The meaning is — "*I declare to you the path, departing by which, Yogis do not return and also the path departing by which, the doers of good actions return.*" By the clause, '*Light in the form of fire, the day, bright fortnight, six months of the northern course'* a period of a year also is denoted.

dhūmo rātris-tathā kṛṣṇaḥ ṣaṇmāsā dakṣiṇāyanam |
tatra cāndramasaṃ jyotir-yogī prāpya nivartate || 25 ||

25. Smoke, night, the dark fortnight, the six months of the southern course of the sun — the Yogi who takes this path reaches the light of the moon and returns.

Commentary

The path described here is the one that leads to the realm of the manes (ancestors) and other such realms. Here the term 'Yogi' refers to one who performs good deeds.

śukla-kṛṣṇe gatī hyete jagataḥ śāśvate mate |
ekayā yāty-anāvṛtim anyāyāvartate punaḥ || *26* ||

26. These two paths, the bright and the dark, are said to be everlasting. By the former, one attains the state of non-return, by the other, one returns again.

Commentary

The '*Path of Light'* is described in verse 24 and the '*Path of Darkness'* is described in verse 25. In the Vedas both the bright and dark paths are said to be everlasting in relation to both the enlightened ones and those who simply do various good deeds. This is confirmed by the text: —

> 'Those who know this and those who worship with faith, meditate in the forest etc., they go to the light'. (Chan. Up., 5.10.1),

and

> 'But those who in the village perform Vedic and secular acts of a meritorious nature and the giving of alms — they pass to the smoke'. (ibid., 5.10.3).

naite sṛtī pārtha jānan yogi muhyati kaścana |
tasmāt sarveṣu kāleṣu yoga-yukto bhavārjuna || *27* ||

27. No Yogi, O Partha, who knows these two paths is ever deluded. Therefore, O Arjuna, at all times engage yourself in Yoga.

Commentary

No enlightened person who fully understands these two paths is deluded by doubt at the time of death. On the contrary, he goes by the path of the gods, his own path. Therefore, every day you should reflect upon these two paths.

Next Sri Krishna speaks of the result of knowing the import of the Shastras, as taught in this and the previous chapters.

vedeṣu yajñeṣu tapaḥsu caiva dāneṣu yat puṇya-phalaṃ pradiṣṭam |
atyeti tat sarvam idaṃ viditvā yogī paraṃ sthānam upaiti cādyam || *28* ||

28. Whatever meritorious results are declared to accrue from the study of the Vedas, from the performance of sacrifices, from the practice of austerities and charity, all this is transcended by the Yogi who knows this teaching of Mine, he reaches the Supreme, Primeval abode.

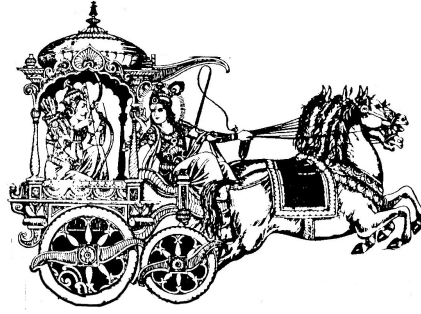
Commentary

Whatever gain is said to be obtained from the four meritorious actions:—

(a) *adhyayana* — the regular study of the Vedas,
(b) *yajña* — the performance of sacrifices,
(c) *tapa* — self-restraint,
(d) *dāna* — charity

all this is transcended by knowing this teaching, namely the greatness of the Lord as taught in these two chapters (7 and 8). By the immense joy arising from the knowledge of the greatness of the Divine, one regards all these merits as insignificant as straw. By being a Yogi, that is, an enlightened person one reaches the Supreme, Original State which is eternal — beyond time.

hariḥ oṃ tatsat
iti śrīmad bhagavadgītāsupaniṣatsu
brahma-vidyāyāṃ yoga-śāstre
śrī-kṛṣṇārjuna saṃvāde tāraka-brahma-yogo
nāmāṣṭamo'dhyāyaḥ

Thus in the Upanishads of the Glorious Bhagavad Gita
The science of the Eternal, the Scripture of Yoga
The dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna
Ends the eighth discourse entitled
"The Way to the Immutable Brahman"

Chapter 9

Rāja-vidyā Rāja-guhya Yogaḥ

The Regal Science & the Royal Secret

Summary of the Teaching

In the previous chapter the details about the differences among the various kinds of devotees have been dealt with. Now, after investigating the eminence of the Supreme Being who is the focus of devotion, the nature of meditation [*upāsana*], in the form of Loving Devotion [*bhakti*], is taught. The superiority of the wise [*jñāni*] is also elaborated upon.

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

idaṃ tu te guhyatamaṃ pravakṣyāmy-anasūyave |
jñānaṃ vijñāna sahitaṃ yat-jñātvā mokṣyase'śubhāt || 1 ||

The Blessed Lord said:

1. I shall declare to you, who do not cavil, this most secret knowledge together with its practical application, knowing which you shall be freed from that which is unhelpful.

Commentary

This most secret knowledge — *upāsana* (meditation), which consists of *bhakti* (loving devotion). In other words — "I have told you about My pre-eminence, which is distinct from all other forms of greatness and is unlimited in its expression. You should be convinced by now of this, and so, being thus prepared, I shall now teach you that knowledge by acquiring which, and applying it, you will be freed from all things that stand in your way and prevent you from attaining Me."

rāja-vidyā rāja-guhyaṃ pavitram idam uttamam |
pratyakṣāvagamaṃ dharmyaṃ su-sukhaṃ kartum avyayam || 2 ||

2. This is the regal science, a regal mystery, the supreme purifier. It is realised by direct experience. It is in accord with Dharma, it is easy to practice and is abiding.

Commentary

This teaching is the greatest among all sciences; and the greatest among mysteries. Alternatively "regal science" may also mean the science known and practiced by kings, and indeed kings are those who have broad and profound minds. In other words this is the science of great minds. This is a great mystery, because the great-minded alone are skilled in keeping secrets. This is the "supreme purifier"; for it removes completely all karmic obstructions which obstruct the attainment of the Supreme Being.

It is realised by "direct perception" — *avagama* is that which is apprehended: the subject of knowledge — the meaning is that Krishna, when meditated upon with loving devotion, becomes immediately directly perceptible.

Even so, it is inseparable from Dharma. Dharma here indicates that which constitutes the means for attaining the highest good. Though meditation (*upāsana*) is of itself, supremely good, as it brings about the vision of the Supreme Being, yet it is also the means for completely attaining Him, which is the final goal and the Supreme Beatitude.

Because of these reasons, it is "easy to practice"; and pleasurable to perform. It is "abiding" or imperishable because it does not perish even after leading to the attainment of Krishna. That is, Krishna gives Himself totally to one who performs this form of meditation; even then it appears to Krishna that He has done nothing for the devotee — such is the meaning.

aśraddadhānāḥ puruṣā dharmasyāsya parantapa |
aprāpya māṃ nivartante mṛtyu-saṃsāra vartmani || 3 ||

3. Those who have no faith in this Dharma, O Scorcher-of-foes, ever remain in this cycle of death (Samsara), without ever attaining Me.

Commentary

Some people may attain the level of spiritual evolution which enables them to engage in the practice of this Dharma called upāsana even then, they may still lack faith in it; in other words they are lacking an eagerness for liberation based upon confidence in this Dharma. They will not attain Krishna but continue in the cycle of births and deaths. "O how strange it is — this obstruction caused by negative Karma!" — such is the meaning.

"Listen then to My inconceivable glory for I am the goal to be attained":

mayā tatam idaṃ sarvaṃ jagad avyakta mūrtinā |
mat-sthāni sarva bhūtāni na cāhaṃ teṣv-avasthitaḥ || 4 ||

4. This entire universe is pervaded by Me, in an unmanifest form. All beings abide in Me, but I do not abide in them.

Commentary

This entire universe — composed of both sentient and insentient beings, is pervaded by Me — the inner controller whose essential nature is unmanifest. The meaning is that all this universe is pervaded by Krishna the Principal (śeṣi) so that He may sustain and manage it. This [doctrine of] universal pervasion by an inner controller, who is invisible to all beings, is taught in the Antaryāmi- Brāhmaṇa.

So also Krishna's primacy over everything is taught.

na ca mat-sthāni bhūtāni paśya me yogam aiśvaram |
bhūta-bhṛnna ca bhūtastho mamātmā bhūta-bhāvanaḥ || 5 ||

5. And yet beings do not abide in Me. Behold My divine Yoga, I am the upholder of all beings and yet I am not in them. My will alone causes their existence.

Commentary

"I am not in them" means — "I do not depend on them for My existence. I do not need any help from them to exist. And yet beings do not abide in Me, as I do not support them as a jug or any other kind of vessel supports the water contained in it. How then are they contained? By My will. Behold My divine Yogic Power, namely, My wonderful Divine qualities, unique to Me alone and having no comparison elsewhere. What are these qualities? I am the sustainer of all beings and yet I am not in them — My will alone keeps them in existence."

The gist is that Krishna is the supporter of all beings, and yet He derives no personal assistance whatever from them. His will alone projects, sustains and controls all beings.

Sri Krishna gives an illustration to show how all beings depend on His will for their existence and activity;

yathākāśa-sthito nityaṃ vāyuḥ sarvatrago mahān |
tathā sarvāṇi bhūtāni mat-sthānīty-upadhāraya || 6 ||

6. As the mighty wind moving everywhere, ever remains in space, even so, know that all beings abide in Me.

Commentary

The mighty wind exists and moves everywhere in space without any perceivable support. So it has to be admitted that the powerful air-current is dependent on Me for its existence and is being upheld by Me alone. Even so, know that all entities abide in Me, who am invisible to them, and that they are upheld by Me alone. The Vedic sages declare thus: —

> The origin of clouds, the waters of the ocean remaining within bounds, the phases of the moon, the strong movements of the gale, the flash of lightning and the movements of the sun—all these are marvellous manifestations of the power of Vishnu. (?)

The meaning is that they are all the marvellous miracles which are unique to Vishnu. The Vedas and other texts also declare likewise:

> 'Verily O Gargi, at the command of that imperishable One, the sun and the moon stand apart' (Br. Up., 3.8.9,)

> 'Through the fear of Him the wind blows, through the fear of Him the sun rises, through the fear of Him Agni and Indra perform their duties' (Tai. Up., 2.8.1).

It has been declared that the existence and activity of all beings originate by the will of the Supreme Being, who is totally independent. Now Sri Krishna declares that the origin and dissolution of all entities also are accomplished by His will only:—

sarva bhūtāni kaunteya prakṛtiṃ yānti māmikām |
kalpa-kṣaye punas-tāni kalpādau visṛjāmy-aham || 7 ||

7. All beings, O Arjuna, are assimilated into My Nature (Prakrti) at the end of a cycle of time (kalpa). Again I send them forth at the beginning of a new cycle.

Commentary

All the mobile and immobile entities enter into Krishna's Being (Prakrti) at the end of a cycle, of Brahma's life. This Prakrti (Nature), constituting the Divine Being, is described by the term Tamas, as it cannot be differentiated into name and form. Manu also concurs:

'This universe became Tamas.... by an act of [divine] will. He produced it out of His body' (Manu, 1.5.8).

The Vedas also declare this: —

> 'He whose physical nature is Unmanifest' (Sub. Up., 7);
> 'The Unmanifest (avyakta) merges into the Imperishable (akṣara), the akṣara into (Darkness) Tamas' (Ibid., 2);

and also —

> 'There was Darkness (Tamas); consciousness was in the beginning concealed by Darkness (Tamas)' (Tai. Br. ii:8-9)

prakṛtiṃ svām-avaṣṭabhya visṛjāmi punaḥ punaḥ |
bhūta-grāmam imaṃ kṛtsnam avaśaṃ prakṛter-vaśāt || 8 ||

8. Animating my own Nature [Prakrti], I send forth again and again all this multitude of beings, helpless under the sway of Prakrti.

Commentary

"I develop it eightfold and send forth this fourfold aggregate of beings; gods, animals, humans and inanimate things, time after time. All these entities are helpless, being under

the sway of Prakrti comprising the three Gunas which cause delusion."

If this is so, it may be argued that the inequalities of creation are due to the Lord being cruel or partial etc. To this, the Lord answers: —

na ca māṃ tāni karmāṇi nibadhnanti dhanañjaya |
udāsīnavad-āsīnam asaktaṃ teṣu karmasu || 9 ||

9. But these actions do not bind Me, O Dhanañjaya, for I remain detached from them, remaining like one indifferent.

Commentary

"But results like the inequality of creation do not bind Me. I cannot be accused of such negative qualities as cruelty, partiality etc, because the differences of conditions like being born as a god, human being, animal or vegetable are all caused by the previous actions (Karmas) of individual Jīvas themselves. I am unaffected by these inequalities."

Accordingly, the author of the Vedanta-sutras says: —

> 'There is no partiality or lack of compassion in Him, because creation is dependent on Karma, for so Scripture declares' (Br. Sutra., 2.1.34),

and

> 'If it be said that there can be no Karma on account of non-distinction [between Jīvas and Brahman prior to creation], it is replied that this is incorrect, because both the Jīvas and Karma are beginningless....' (Ibid. 2.1.35).

mayādhyakṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ sūyate sacarācaram |
hetunānena kaunteya jagad viparivartate || 10 ||

10. Under My supervision, Prakrti produces all beings that move and move not. Indeed, because of this, O Kaunteya, does the world revolve.

Commentary

Behold in this wonderful phenomena the cosmic dominion inherent in Krishna, and personal characteristics such as sovereignty, true resolve and being free from cruelty and similar defects! So declare the Vedas:—

> 'The possessor of Maya [the Lord] projects this universe out of this [Prakrti in its subtle state]. Another [the individual Self] is confined by Maya in the world. One should know the Maya to be the Prakrti. And the possessor of Maya to be the Mighty Lord' (Sve. Up., 4;9-10)

avajānanti māṃ mūḍhā mānuṣīṃ tanum-āśritam |
paraṃ bhāvam ajānanto mama bhūta-maheśvaram || 11 ||

11. Fools disregard Me, appearing in a human form, not knowing My transcendental nature, as the Supreme Lord of all beings.

Commentary

"I am in fact the Supreme Lord of all beings, the Omniscient One, who is completely self-determining, who has taken a human body out of great compassion so that I might become the refuge of all. They do not realise My true disposition of unlimited compassion, magnanimity, condescension and maternal solicitude which is the reason for My appearing in a human form. But without understanding this, the ignorant consider Me as of the same nature as other beings, because I have assumed the human form."

moghāśā mogha-karmāṇo mogha-jñānā vicetasaḥ |
rākṣasīm-āsurīṃ caiva prakṛtiṃ mohinīṃ śritāḥ || *12* ||

12. Of vain hopes, of vain works and vain knowledge and insensible, verily they have a deceitful nature like that of the night-wanderers (*Rakṣasas*) and jealous-gods (*Asuras*).

Commentary

"Disregarding My transcendental disposition of supreme compassion etc, when I appear as a human; they yield to the deceptive lower drives of brutish beings. Their hopes remain futile, their enterprises remain ineffectual, and their knowledge is unproductive. This is due to their mistaken perception which fails to recognise that all things, mobile and immobile, belong to Me. They are ignorant because of the lack of knowledge of the all pervading Truth. Whatever they do regarding Me, the Lord of all, is done with an attitude that I am an ordinary mortal. So their efforts are all worthless." — this is the meaning.

mahātmān-astu māṃ pārtha daivīṃ prakṛtim-āśritāḥ |
bhajanty-ananya-manaso jñātvā-bhūtādim-avyayam || *13* |

13. But the magnanimous ones, O Arjuna, who share My divine nature, adore Me with a single mind, knowing Me to be the immutable source of beings.

satataṃ kīrtayanto māṃ yatantaśca dṛḍha-vratāḥ |
namasyantaśca māṃ bhaktyā nitya-yuktā upāsate || *14* ||

14. Always glorifying Me, striving with steadfast resolution and prostrating to Me in devotion, aspiring for eternal communion with Me, they adore Me.

jñāna yajñena cāpyanye yajanto mām-upāsate |
ekatvena pṛthaktvena bahudhā viśvato-mukham || *15* ||

15. Others, too, besides offering the sacrifice of wisdom, worship Me as One, who is characterised by diversity in various ways, and is multiform (in My Cosmic aspect).

Commentary

The purport is this: — the Lord Vasudeva, [in the state of Cosmic Dissolution] takes a form (*śarīra*) comprised of all the Jīvas and material substance of the universe in an extremely subtle state, incapable of being distinguished by name and form. He then resolves by His perfect power of will: — "May I become embodied in gross animate and inanimate entities, distinguished variously by name and form." He then transmogrifies into the variegated cosmos comprised of gods, animals, humans and insentient matter — which exists as His corporeal manifestation (*śarīra*). Adoration of Krishna [through the sacrifice of wisdom] is done by contemplating in this manner.

Therefore Sri Krishna declares:— 'I, having the universe for My body, alone abide'.

ahaṃ kratur-ahaṃ yajñāḥ svadhāham aham auṣadham |
mantro'ham aham-evājyam aham-agnir-ahaṃ hutam || *16* ||

16. I am the Kratu; I am the Yajña; I am the offering to the manes; I am the herbs; I am the Mantra; I alone am the clarified butter; I am the fire; I am the act of oblating.

Commentary

I am the Kratu; which is the category of all the Vedic sacrifices such as the Jyotiṣṭoma and all the others. *I am the Yajña* — this refers to the fivefold daily sacrifices. *I am the offering to the manes* (*Svadhā*) — the libation offered to nourish the hosts of manes (Ancestors). *I*

am the herbs — the grains that are offered into the fire. *I am the Mantra* — the formulae with which offerings are made. *I alone am the clarified butter* — which also implies other examples of offering too, such as the oblation of Soma juice etc. *I am the fire* — the three ritual Vedic fires known as *Āhavaniya, Gārhapatya* and *Dakṣina*. *I am the act of oblating* — the act of offering liquid into fire.

pitāham-asya jagato mātā dhātā pitāmahaḥ |
vedyaṃ pavitram oṃkāra ṛk-sāma yajur-eva ca || *17* ||

17. I am the father, mother, mid-wife and grandfather of this universe. I am the object of knowledge; I am the purifier. I am the syllable Om and also the Rigveda, Samaveda and the Yajurveda.

Commentary

Here the term Dhatṛ (creator) stands for a person other than the parents, who helps in one's birth (ie. a mid-wife). Whatever the supreme goal is, that is taught by the Vedas and is [mentally] purifying, "I alone am that. I am the syllable AUM, which is the origin of knowledge and is the seed of the entire Veda comprising of the three divisions — Rik, Saman and Yajus."

gatir-bhartā prabhuḥ sākṣī nivāsaḥ śaraṇaṃ suhṛt |
prabhavaḥ pralayaḥ sthānaṃ nidhānaṃ bījam avyayam || *18* ||

18. I am the Goal, the Supporter, the Lord, the Witness, the Abode, the Refuge and the Friend [of the universe]. I am the Seat of origin and dissolution, that which is preserved and the imperishable seed.

Commentary

The Goal — that which is reached; it means that ultimate state to which all paths lead. *The Supporter* — one who upholds. *The Lord* — the one who rules the universe. *The Witness* — one who directly perceives everything that is going on. *The Abode* — that in which one resides such as a house etc. *The Refuge* — the intelligent being who has to be resorted to, who leads one to the attainment of desirable things and avoidance of evils. *The Friend* — one who desires one's welfare. *The Seat* — that focal point [substrata] in which origin and dissolution takes place. *That which is preserved* (*nidhanam*) — that which comes into being and is again dissolved. *The imperishable seed* — that supreme cause which is never extinguished.

tapāmyaham ahaṃ varṣaṃ nigṛhṇāmy utsṛjāmi ca |
amṛtaṃ caiva mṛtyuśca sadasac-cāham arjuna || *19* ||

19. I give heat; I am the rain which I send forth and hold back; I am immortality as well as death, O Arjuna, I am being, and also non-being.

Commentary

"In the form of fire and the sun it is I alone that send out heat. I alone am both that by which the world lives and dies. Why say more? I am being and non-being." — Being is that which exists in the present time. Non-being is that which existed in the past and that which may exist in the future, but does not exist at the present moment.

The gist is that, "I alone am existent, all the entities exist as My self-expression; all sentient and insentient beings existing in all states, constitute My corporeal manifestation. In this way, they (the wise) adore Me, contemplating upon My essential unity with the entire universe distinguished by names and forms and characterised by varied pluralities — all the diversities being only modalities of My self-expression."

Thus, after illustrating the character of the noble-minded whose only enjoyment consists of the experience of the Lord, and in order to emphasise their greatness, Sri Krishna describes the behaviour of ignorant men who are enrapt by the objects of desire.

traividya māṃ somapāḥ pūta-pāpa yajñāir iṣṭvā svargatiṃ prārthayante |
te puṇyam āsādya surendra-lokam aśnanti divyān divi deva-bhogān || *20* ||

20. Those who are versed in the three Vedas, being purified from sin by drinking the Soma juice, pray for the way to heaven and worship Me by sacrifices. Reaching the holy realm of the King of the gods, they enjoy in heaven the celestial pleasures of the gods.

Commentary

The followers or knowers of the three Vedas are called *Trai-vidya* they are to be distinguished from those who follow Vedanta (*Trayyanta*). "Those who study the Vedanta (Science of the Self), know Me as the only subject to be known from the study of the Vedas. Considering Me as the highest goal of attainment, they adore Me through chanting My names etc., induced by deep devotion to Me, and also through spiritual study."

But [in contrast] the followers of the three Vedas (*Trai-vidya*) drink the Soma beverage remaining from the sacrifices in honour of Indra and other devas, as prescribed by the Vedas. They are thereby purified of the sins that stand in the way of attainment of heaven. In these sacrifices, in which Indra and the other deities are regarded as God they actually worship Krishna through them. They however do not know that Krishna abides within these devas and so they pray for access to heaven. After attaining the world of Indra, which is free from suffering, they enjoy the divine pleasures in abundance.

te taṃ bhuktvā svarga-lokaṃ viśālaṃ kṣīṇe puṇye marta-lokaṃ viśanti |
evaṃ trayī-dharmam anuprapannā gatāgataṃ kāmakāmā labhante || *21* ||

21. Having enjoyed the vast realm of heaven, they return to the realm of mortals when their merit is exhausted. Thus, those who follow the Vedic rituals and are motivated by desire, come and go.

Commentary

They return to the material realm when the positive Karma which is the cause of the experience of heaven is exhausted. After enjoying the trifling and transient pleasures of heaven, they return to Samsāra again and again.

But the great beings (followers of Vedanta) meditating on Krishna, who is incomparably dear to them, obtain boundless and unsurpassed bliss and do not return to Samsāra.

Sri Krishna describes their distinguishing features:—

ananyāś-cintayanto māṃ ye janāḥ paryupāsate |
teṣāṃ nityābhiyuktānāṃ yoga-kṣemaṃ vahāmyaham || *22* ||

22. There are those who, not being mindful of anything else, adore Me alone, aspiring after eternal union with Me. I Myself take charge of their prosperity and welfare (*Yoga* and *Kṣema*).

Commentary

"Those who, excluding everything else and having no other purpose, meditate on Me as their only goal, because without Me they are unable to sustain themselves. In the case of such devotees aspiring after eternal unification with Me, I Myself undertake the responsibility of bringing them to Myself — *Yoga* (prosperity) and of preserving them in that state for ever — *Kṣema* (welfare)." The meaning is that they do not return to *Samsara*.

ye'pyanya-devatā-bhaktā yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ |
te'pi mām-eva kaunteya yajanty-avidhi-pūrvakam || *23* ||

23. Even those who, endowed with faith are devoted to other gods, they worship Me alone, O Kaunteya, in an indirect manner.

Commentary

In the light of the principle that all entities are Krishna's modalities and He alone is the ultimate existence; names like 'Indra' primarily denote Krishna alone. The worshippers of Indra and other deities therefore ultimately worship Krishna only, in ways not sanctioned by the Shastras ie. they do not worship Indra and other divinities with a proper understanding of the place of these deities in the light of the Vedanta texts. An example is:—

> "Wherein (ie., in the Supreme Self) the sacrifices known as the Caturhotri attain their fulfilment through the gods." (Tai. Ar. 3:11:1) etc.

The meaning [of this verse] is that in the Catur-hotri sacrifice like Agni-hotra, the full moon and the new moon sacrifices etc., it is the Supreme Being only that is worshipped, as He is the very Self of Indra and the others who are the ostensible subjects of worship in these sacrifices by which these worshippers obtain their aims.

Therefore, the votaries of the three Vedas do not understand that these rituals are intended for the worship of the Supreme Being and that He alone is to be worshipped. Due to their lack of insight they experience limited results, and are again liable to fall into Samsāra. Sri Krishna says further:—

ahaṃ hi sarva-yajñānāṃ bhoktā ca prabhur-eva ca |
na tu mām-abhijānanti tattvenātaś-cyavanti te || *24* ||

24. For, I alone am the enjoyer and the only Lord of all sacrifices. They do not recognise Me in My true nature; hence they fall.

Commentary

I am the only Lord means that "I alone am the bestower of the rewards of all sacrifices."

How wonderful indeed, that exactly the same type of [ritual] action, yields totally different results through the difference in intention (*saṅkalpa*); some experience a very trifling reward with the return [to Samsāra], while others receive a reward in the form of attainment of the Supreme Being which is absolute, limitless, and incomparable! Sri Krishna explains this: —

yānti deva-vratā devān pitṛn-yānti pitṛ-vratāḥ |
bhūtāni yānti bhūtejyā yānti madyājino'pi mām || *25* ||

25. Devotees of the gods go to the gods. The ancestor worshippers go to the manes; the worshippers of inferior forces go to them; and those who worship Me come to Me.

Commentary

The term *Vrata* (votary rites) in the text denotes will, intention or motive (*saṅkalpa*). Those who are motivated with firm resolution (*saṅkalpa*) to worship the gods, like Indra and go to them, as do those who worship the ancestors, Yakṣas, Rakṣasas, Piśācas and other inferior forces — they all go to them. But those who, with the same liturgical acts, worship Krishna with the understanding that He is Vāsudeva, the Supreme Self, who manifests Himself through the gods, the manes and the lower forces — they are devotees and they reach Krishna only — they do not return to Samsāra. Such is the meaning.

Sri Krishna continues to say, 'There is also another distinguishing characteristic of My votaries' —

patraṃ puṣpaṃ phalaṃ toyaṃ yo me bhaktyā prayacchati |
tad-ahaṃ bhakty-upahṛtam-aśnāmi prayatātmanaḥ || *26* ||

26. Whoever offers to Me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit or some water, I accept this offering made with devotion by one who is pure of heart.

Commentary

"True devotion is love for Me so profound that the devotee cannot sustain himself without making such offering; the devotee has no purpose other than service. Such an offering coming from a heart rendered pure with that singleness of purpose — of considering the offering as an end in itself — I, the Lord of the universe, I accept and enjoy the aforesaid type of offering, as if I was obtaining a desired object far beyond the range of My expectations."

yat-karoṣi yad-aśnāsi yaj-juhoṣi dadāsi yat |
yat-tapasyasi kaunteya tat-kuruṣva mad-arpaṇam || *27* ||

27. Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer in sacrifice, whatever you give away, whatever austerity you practice, O Kaunteya, do that as an offering to Me.

Commentary

Whatsoever secular work you do for the maintenance of the body, whatsoever you set aside for the sustenance of the body, whatsoever religious rites, obligatory (*nityam*) and occasional (*naimittikam*) you practice, like offering oblations into the sacred fire, performing charity and austerity — do all these as an offering to Me. *Arpaṇa* means offering — do all acts, secular and religious, as if the doer, the enjoyer and the worshipped were all offerings to Me.

śubhāśubha phalair-evaṃ mokṣyase karma-bandhanaiḥ |
saṃnyāsa yoga-yuktātmā vimukto mām-upaiṣyasi || *28* ||

28. Thus imbued with a mind steadfast in the Yoga of renunciation, you will free yourself from the bonds of Karma, productive of auspicious as well as inauspicious results — thus liberated, you will come to Me.

samo'haṃ sarva-bhūteṣu na me dveṣyo'sti na priyaḥ |
ye bhajanti tu māṃ bhaktyā mayi te teṣu cāpyaham || *29* ||

29. I am the same to all beings; to Me there is none hateful or dear; but those who worship Me with devotion abide in Me and I in them.

Commentary

"Being the refuge for all, I am the same to all beings, be they gods, animals, humans or plants in their multitude of forms from the highest to the lowest, being differentiated according to birth, form, character and consciousness. With regard to those seeking refuge, none is offensive to Me because of inferiority in status, birth, form, character, consciousness etc. No one is discarded as an object of abhorrence. Likewise, those who do take refuge in Me are not esteemed on account of any consideration like birth, status etc. — the fact that one has surrendered to Me is the only consideration."

The meaning is no one is chosen for Liberation for reasons like birth, status, character etc. But Krishna appreciates those who adore Him as their only exceedingly beloved objective, and because they find it impossible to sustain themselves without worshipping Him. So they

abide in Him, irrespective of their qualities such as high or low birth, etc. They remain with Krishna at ease, as if they possess qualities equal to His. He also abides in them, as if they are His superiors.

api-cet sudurācāro bhajate mām-ananyabhāk ।
sādhur-eva sa mantavyaḥ samyag-vyavasito hi saḥ ।। *30* ।।

30. If even the most sinful person worships Me with devotion to no other, he must be regarded as righteous, for he has rightly resolved.

Commentary

"Even though one has transgressed the rules pertaining to one's social situation or failed to avoid forbidden things; if one has begun to adore Me in the manner described above with undivided devotion, namely, worship as an end in itself — such a person must be considered highly righteous. He is pre-eminent among devotees and must be esteemed as worthy of honour." The meaning is that such a person is equal to those enlightened ones [Jñanins] mentioned earlier.

What can be the reason for this? The reason is that, he has rightly resolved, ie. his resolve is in the proper direction —

> "The Lord who is the exclusive Cause of the entire universe, is the Supreme Brahman, Nārāyaṇa, the Lord of all that is mobile and immobile. He is my master, my teacher, and my friend, my highest object of enjoyment,"

— such a resolve is difficult to be made by most people. Its consequence; perpetual adoration of Krishna as an end in itself, will naturally arise in one who has made this resolve. Hence he is righteous and is to be highly honoured irrespective of the transgression of social rules which is trifling compared to this kind of excellence. Such a devotee is not to be treated with disdain but esteemed: such is the meaning.

Now, if it be claimed that the transgression of rules will completely obstruct the flow of meditation, as declared in the Vedic passages like:—

> 'One who has not ceased from wrong conduct, is not tranquil, is not composed and also not calm in mind, cannot obtain Him through meditation.' (Ka. Up. 1:2:24),

Sri Krishna replies: —

kṣipraṃ bhavati dharmātmā śāśvacchāntiṃ nigacchati ।
kaunteya prati-jānīhi na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati ।। *31* ।।

31. Speedily he becomes righteous and obtains everlasting peace, affirm on My behalf, O Kaunteya, that My devotee never perishes.

Commentary

"Very soon the qualities (Gunas) of Rajas and Tamas are eradicated along with their roots, as he has been purified of all sins through worshipping Me without any ulterior motive. Quickly his mind becomes especially attuned to meditating on Me with all the ancillaries [of Karma Yoga] and overcomes all impediments. It is this kind of adoration which was alluded to by the term 'Dharma' at the commencement of this chapter. Such a person obtains enduring peace, ie., attains to an eternal state, free from any conduct which hinders access to Me and from which there will be no backsliding."

"O Arjuna, you may affirm to others that one who has taken the first steps to meditate upon Me in this way, will not perish, even though tainted by some misconduct in the past. On count of devotion to Me, one will be able to conquer the entire host of impediments [to spiritual progress]. After becoming completely free from impediments one quickly obtains perfection in Bhakti (Devotion/meditation)."

māṃ hi pārtha vyapāśritya ye'pi syuḥ pāpa-yonayaḥ |
striyo vaiśyās-tathā śūdrās-te'pi yānti parāṃ gatim || *32* ||

32. By taking refuge in Me even those of unfavourable birth, women, vaiśyas and also śūdras attain the supreme state.

kiṃ punar-brāhmaṇāḥ puṇyā bhaktā rājarṣayas-tathā |
anityam asukhaṃ lokam imaṃ prāpya bhajasva mām || *33* ||

33. How much more [easily] then the Brahmanas and royal sages who are pure and are devoted to Me! Having come into this transient world of suffering, do you worship Me.

Commentary

"Women, farmers and peasants, and even those who are born into marginalised social circumstances (*pāpa-yoni*), can attain the supreme state by taking refuge in Me. How much more then the well-born Brahmanas and royal sages who are naturally devoted to me! Therefore, royal sage that you are, having been born into this impermanent and unhappy world, stricken by the threefold affliction meditate upon Me, as you traverse the path of life."

Sri Krishna now describes the nature of Bhakti:

manmanā bhāva mad-bhakto mad-yājī māṃ namas-kuru |
māmevaiṣyasi yuktvaivam ātmānaṃ mat parāyaṇam || *34* ||

34. Focus your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, offer worship to Me, bow down to Me. Engaging your mind in this manner and regarding Me as the supreme goal, you will come to Me.

Commentary

"Fix your mind on Me without interruption like the flow of a continuous stream of oil — meditate upon Me as the Supreme Ruler, opposed to all that is negative, the sole repository of goodness, the omniscient one who is completely self-determining, the sole cause of the entire universe, the Supreme Brahman, the Supreme Person; having large eyes shaped like a lotus petal; with a complexion like a clear blue cloud; whose radiance is like that of a thousand suns simultaneously risen; the great ocean of exquisite beauty; having four arms, noble and strong, dressed in brilliant yellow raiment; adorned with a pure crown, crocodile-shaped ear-rings, garlands, arm-bracelets and bangles on the wrists; the ocean of infinite mercy, affability, beauty, sweetness, majesty, magnanimity and parental affection; the refuge of all without exception and without partiality — the Supreme Lord of all."

Offer worship to Me — Worship is really the conduct of one who realises that he is absolutely dependant — (śeṣa) on God. Worship traditionally consists also in offering

(1) all things of enjoyment such as waving of lights etc.

(2) all those things which are tangible like garlands, sandal paste etc.,

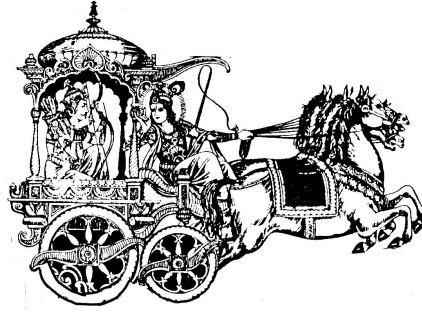
(3) food offerings.

Here the term ātman stands for the mind [rather than the Self]

The purport is that you will reach Krishna alone if you regard Krishna as your only support and with determination you should meditate on Krishna, experience Krishna, worship Krishna and bow down to Krishna — Thus, with such mental resolve you should carry on your secular works for bodily sustenance and religious activities as acts for pleasing Krishna alone, regarding them as impelled by Krishna and finding sole joy in absolute subservience to Krishna. You should always engage yourself in chanting Krishna's names with love, and endeavour to serve Krishna etc. Contemplating on the

multitude of Krishna's attributes, and practising every day this worship as described, you will reach Krishna alone.

hariḥ oṃ tatsat
iti śrīmad bhagavadgītāsupaniṣatsu
brahma-vidyāyāṃ yogaśāstre
śrī-kṛṣṇārjuna saṃvāde rāja-guhya-yogo
nāma navamo'dhyāyaḥ

Thus in the Upanishads of the Glorious Bhagavad Gita
The science of the Eternal, the Scripture of Yoga
The dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna
Ends the ninth discourse entitled
"The Royal Secret"

Chapter 10

Vibhūti Yogaḥ

Manifestation of Divine Glories

Summary of the Teaching

In order to generate and to foster the development of Bhakti Yoga, Krishna taught that He is the Over-Self of all beings. A narration of His unique characteristic auspicious attributes was given. Bhakti Yoga with its preparatory disciplines was taught. Now, in order to further cultivate and nurture devotion, it will now be taught that the totality of the Lord's auspicious attributes are infinite, that His sovereignty over the whole universe is unrivalled, and that the universe is governed by His will as it constitutes His corporeal manifestation (*śarīra*), with Him for its Self.

śrī bhagavān uvāca

bhūya eva mahā-bāho śṛṇu me paramaṃ vacaḥ |
yatte'haṃ prīyamāṇāya vakṣyāmi hita-kāmyayā || *1* ||

The Blessed Lord said;
1. Further, O Arjuna, listen to My supreme teaching, which, desirous of your welfare, I shall impart to you who love Me.

Commentary

"Listen with rapt attention to these words which I shall speak — a consummate teaching which will give you a much broader understanding of My greatness. I shall teach you about the arising and development of devotion to Me, as you're pleased with listening to My greatness and because I too love you."

na me viduḥ sura-gaṇāḥ prabhavaṃ na maharṣayaḥ |
aham-ādir-hi devānāṃ maharṣīṇāṃ ca sarvaśaḥ || *2* ||

2. Neither the hosts of gods nor the great seers know My glory. Indeed, I am the sole source of the gods and of the great seers.

Commentary

"However supernatural their vision, and however great their knowledge, the hosts of gods and the wise seers cannot comprehend My particular glory. They do not know My name, activity, essential nature, attributes etc., the reason being that I am the source in every way of these gods and great seers. I am the very source of their nature, knowledge and power etc. They have become gods and great seers because I have given them understanding according to their meritorious deeds. That understanding is limited and therefore they do not know My essential nature and characteristics as they really are."

Sri Krishna proceeds to explain that insight into His true nature, which is beyond the grasp of gods and sages and which is the means for release from the hindrances that obstruct the dawning of devotion: —

yo māṃ ajam anādiṃ ca vetti loka-maheśvaram |
asamūḍhaḥ sa martyeṣu sarva-pāpaiḥ pramucyate || *3* ||

3. One who knows Me as unborn and without a beginning; the great Lord of the worlds — is undeluded among mortals and is liberated from all negative acts.

Commentary

He who, unlike other beings, exists 'without being born' at any particular time is 'unborn' in the sense of being eternal. This attribute denotes a unique state essentially different from both inorganic things which are subject to modifications, and from the Jiva involved in Samsara and conjoined with insensible matter. In this state of material involvement the birth of the Jiva is caused by Karma.

The term '*Anādi'*, or without beginning, is used to distinguish the state of the Lord, which is distinct from that of the liberated Self. Although the liberated Self is in fact also eternal, it can be said to have a beginning from the point of view that the state of liberation has a beginning. Previously the Self had been trapped in material nature, a state from which it had to be liberated. Hence the term '*Anadi'* implies that the Lord is without such involvement and does not deserve the same description.

The Veda also says: — 'He who is stainless' (Sve.Up., 6:19).

Thus, an undeluded person understands that Krishna's nature is totally contrary to any association with negativity. The term 'delusion' refers to the error of regarding Krishna simply as one among other divinities of the same kind. To be free of this delusion is to be '*undeluded'* — such a person is released from all reactions of negative acts which obstruct the rise of Bhakti.

The gist of what is said is this: — In this world, the king who rules over others is only like all other men. He has become a ruler by virtue of some good Karma. Such is also the case with the king of the gods (Indra). Even the Creator (Brahma) of the World (Brahmanda) is of the same class as other beings involved in Samsara, because he too is a created being, coming within the threefold classification of beings according to the three innate tendencies for growth. The Veda also says;— He who creates Brahma' (Sve. Up. 6:18). [which indicates that Brahma is a created being].

The same is the case with all those who have acquired the eight supernatural psychic powers. But I, the Supreme Being, am the great Lord of the worlds. The un-deluded person knows Me as essentially different from insentient matter in its sequential state of cause and effect, and also from the Jivatman whether conjoined with material nature or liberated from it, and from everything else, because everything in the universe is subject to My control.

Thus, after teaching the method of annihilating all negativity impeding the rise of Bhakti, by contemplation on His essential nature, and also affirming the development of devotion by the destruction of such opposing factors, Sri Krishna now explains the way in which Bhakti develops by contemplation on His sovereign power and boundless positive attributes: —

buddhir-jñānam asammohaḥ kṣamā satyaṃ damaḥ śamaḥ |
sukhaṃ duḥkhaṃ bhavo'bhāvo bhayaṃ cābhyam-eva ca || *4* ||

4. Intelligence, knowledge, non-delusion, forbearance, truth, restraint, self-control, pleasure and pain, exaltation and depression, fear and fearlessness;

ahiṃsā samatā tuṣṭis-tapo dānaṃ yaśo'yaśaḥ |
bhavanti bhāvā bhūtānāṃ matta eva pṛthag-vidhāḥ || *5* ||

5. Non-violence, equanimity, cheerfulness, austerity, beneficence, fame and infamy — these different [psychological] qualities arise from Me alone.

Commentary

'*Intelligence'* — is the power of the mind to investigate and ascertain. '*Knowledge'* — is the power of determining the difference between the two entities: insentient matter and the sentient Self. *'Non-delusion'* — is freedom from deception like that of perceiving the mother-of-pearl in a shell as silver — a delusion which arises from the superimposition of the memory of a thing once seen on another thing now being perceived. '*Forbearance'* — is a state of mind in which one remains calm even when there is a [valid] cause for becoming disturbed. '*Truth'* — is the describing of things as they actually are, and is also meant for the welfare of all beings. In this context the acting of the mind in conformity with this ideal is intended, because the content is with reference to the thought processes. '*Restraint'* — is refraining from activity which results in causing suffering to others. '*Self-control'* — is the restraint of the mind in the same manner. 'Pleasure' — is the experience of that which is agreeable to oneself. '*Pain'* — is the experience of what is disagreeable. '*Exaltation'* — is the mental state of elation caused by experiences which are agreeable to oneself. '*Depression'* — is the feeling of hopelessness caused by disagreeable experiences. '*Fear'* — is the stress caused by the expectation of future suffering. '*Fearlessness'* — is the absence of such feelings. *'Non-violence'* — is refraining from being the cause of suffering to other beings. '*Equanimity'* — is being mentally balanced in whatever comes; good or bad and to look with neutrality on whatever happens to oneself, one's friends and one's enemies. '*Cheerfulness'* — is the natural feeling of joy with the perceived universe. '*Austerity'* — is self-discipline by denying oneself pleasures, as enjoined by the Scriptures. '*Beneficence'* — is giving to another whatever objects one personally enjoys. '*Fame'* — is the [generation of the] reputation of possessing good qualities. '*Infamy'* — is the bad reputation arising from possessing negative qualities. The mental processes which lead to the generation of fame and infamy must be understood here, because psychology is the subject-matter of the context [of this verse]. Austerity and beneficence are also to be understood in the same way. All these psychological processes which lead to either activity or inactivity, arise from Me alone, ie., they are dependent on My volition.

maharṣayaḥ sapta pūrve catvāro manavas-tathā |
mad-bhāvā mānasā jātā yeṣāṃ loka imāḥ prajāḥ || *6* ||

6. The seven great seers [Rishis] of yore and similarly the four Manus, all are my mental expansions empowered by Me. All these creatures of the world are descended from them.

Commentary

'The seven great Rishis of yore', namely, those seven great Rishis like Bhrgu etc., who were born from the mind of Brahma in the cycle of the previous Manu [Universal administrator] to perpetuate the creation; and the four Manus who are the sons of Savarna were created in order to supervise the work of sustentation. All creatures in the world are their progeny. So they are the progenitors as well as the sustainers of all beings until the time of cosmic dissolution [Pralaya]. The Rishis and the Manus, derive their empowerment from Me. Their disposition is My disposition — they do what I want them to do — this the meaning.

etāṃ vibhūtiṃ yogaṃ ca mama yo vetti tattvataḥ |
so'vikalpena yogena yujyate nātra saṃśayaḥ || *7* ||

7. He who in truth knows My sovereignty and splendour of auspicious attributes, becomes imbued with the unshakeable Yoga of Bhakti; of this, there is no doubt.

Commentary

Sovereignty (*Vibhuti*) is the condition of being the Supreme Lord. The one who in truth knows this Vibhuti which displays itself through My being the basis of origination, sustentation and activity of everything, and also that I have absolute auspicious attributes; antithetical to all that is negative — such a person becomes firmly established in Bhakti Yoga.

Sri Krishna now shows how the learning about His sovereignty increases devotion.

ahaṃ sarvasya prabhavo mattaḥ sarvaṃ pravartate |
iti matvā-bhajante māṃ budhā bhāva-samanvitāḥ || *8* ||

8. I am the source of all; everything emerges from Me — realising this the enlightened ones adore Me with complete devotion (*Bhāva*).

Commentary

'Bhāva' is a particular bent of mind, here a loving disposition of the mind. The meaning is that they worship Krishna with intense yearning of the heart. How?

mac-cittā mad-gata-prāṇā bodhayantaḥ parasparam |
kathayantaśca māṃ nityaṃ tuṣyanti ca ramanti ca || *9* ||

9. With their minds focussed on Me, with their life-force centred in Me, confiding in one another and always speaking of Me, they live in contentment and bliss at all times.

Commentary

With their 'Prāṇa', ie. the life-force centred on Me — the meaning is that they are unable to sustain themselves without Me. They 'confide in one another' by revealing their personal spiritual experiences and by discussing My divine and adorable pastimes. The speakers are delighted by their own narration, because it is spontaneous, without any ulterior motive; the listeners too, feel the narration to be peerless and incomparably cherishable. They thus live in bliss.

teṣāṃ satata-yuktānāṃ bhajatāṃ prīti-pūrvakam |
dadāmi buddhi-yogaṃ taṃ yena mām-upayānti te || *10* ||

10. To those, who are constantly harmonised with Me and who worship Me with intense love, I fondly grant the mental disposition (Buddhi-yoga) by which they attain to Me.

Commentary

Those 'who are constantly harmonised with Me,' are those who desire eternal unification with Me, and who worship Me, I grant them with love, that 'Buddhi-yoga' or mature devotional state, by which they come to Me.

teṣām evānukam pārtham aham ajñānajaṃ tamaḥ |
nāśayāmy-ātmabhāvastho jñāna-dīpena-bhāsvatā || *11* ||

11. Out of compassion for them alone, I, being the focus of their thought processes, dispel the darkness born of ignorance by the brilliant lamp of wisdom.

Commentary

To show mercy to them alone, abiding in their thought flow, ie., established as the object of their thoughts — I dispel the darkness born of ignorance in the form of old samskaras consisting of attachment to objects other than Myself, to which they were previously

habituated. Thus having heard of the multitude of auspicious attributes, and of the extent of the sovereign glories of the Lord which are unique and different from all others and which generate unsurpassed joy in listeners, Arjuna expresses a desire to hear the details about them and said: —

arjuna uvāca

paraṃ brahma paraṃ dhāma pavitraṃ paramaṃ bhavān |
puruṣaṃ śāśvataṃ divyam ādidevam ajaṃ vibhum || 12 ||

Arjuna said:
12. You are Supreme Brahman, the Supreme Light, and the Supreme Purifier. All the seers proclaim You as the eternal, divine Person, the Primal Lord, the unborn and all-pervading.

ahus-tvām ṛṣayaḥ sarve devārṣir-nāradas -tathā |
asito devalo vyāsaḥ svayaṃ caiva bravīṣi me || 13 ||

13. So also declare all the divine sages Narada, Asita, Devala and Vyasa, now You Yourself also proclaim this.

Commentary

Thus the Vedas assert:—

'From whom all these beings are born, by whom, when born, they live and into whom they return when they perish— investigate this well. This is Brahman' (Tai.Up., 3.1.1);

'He who knows Brahman attains the Highest' (Ibid., 2.1.1); and

'He who knows the Supreme Brahman becomes the Brahman' (Mun.Up., 3.2.9).

Likewise Krishna is the Supreme Light. The term 'Dhaman' here connotes light:

'Now, the light which shines beyond this highest heaven. ' (Cha.Up., 3.13.7);

'Attaining the Supreme Light, it [the liberated jiva] appears with its own form' (Ibid., 8.12.2);

'The gods worship Him as the Light of lights' (Br.Up., 4.4.16).

Krishna is also the Supreme Sanctifier, the One who is the ultimate liberator from sins. He purifies the meditator of all sins (proclivities) and also destroys them (their effects) without any trace.

The Veda declares: —

'As water clings not to the leaf of a lotus-flower, so sinful deeds cling not to one who knows thus' (Cha. Up., 4.14.3):

'Just as the fibre of Ishika reed (reed-cotton) laid on a fire is burnt up, so also all one's sins are burnt up' (Ibid., 5.24.3); and

'Nārāyaṇa is the Supreme Brahman, Nārāyaṇa is the Supreme Light, Nārāyaṇa is the Supreme Self' (Ma. Na., 9.4).

Sages are those who know in reality the higher truth (the Supreme Brahman), and the lower truth (individual jivas); they speak of Krishna as the eternal Divine Person, Original Lord, the unborn and all-pervading. So also divine sage Narada, Asita, Devala and Vyasa declare: —

This Nārāyaṇa, Lord of Sri, the one who resides on the Milk Ocean, relinquishing His Serpent-couch, has come to the city of Mathura 'Wherever Krishna is, there is the blessed [city of] Dvaravati. He is the Lord Himself, the ancient One and Eternal Dharma. Those who know the Vedas and those who know the Self declare the great-minded Krishna to be the eternal Dharma. Of all sanctifiers, Krishna is said to be the most sanctifying, the most virtuous of the virtuous, the most auspicious among the auspicious. The lotus-eyed God of gods, the eternal, abides as the three worlds... Hari whose essential nature is beyond thought, abides thus. Madhusudana is there alone' (Ma. Bha. Vana., 88.24-25).

Similarly it is stated: —

> 'O Arjuna, where the Divine, the eternal Nārāyaṇa the Supreme Self is, there the entire universe, the sacred water and the holy shrines are to be found. That is sacred, that is Supreme Brahman, those are sacred waters, that is the austerity grove — there dwell the divine sages, the Siddhas and all those rich in austerities where the Primal Creator, the great Yogin Krishna the slayer of the demon Madhu dwells. It is the most sacred among the sacred. For you, let there be no doubt about this' (Ibid-, 90 28-32);

> 'Krishna Himself is the origin and dissolution of all beings. For, this universe, consisting of sentient and insentient entities, was projected for the sake of Krishna (Ma. Bha. Sabha., 38.23).

And Krishna Himself says so in the passage beginning with— 'Earth, water, fire, ether, mind, intellect and Ahamkara; this Prakrti, which is divided eightfold, is Mine' (7.4) and ending with 'I am the origin of all; from Me proceed everything' (10.8).

sarvam etad ṛtaṃ manye yan-māṃ vadasi keśava |
na hi te bhagavan vyaktiṃ vidur-devā na dānavāḥ || 14 ||

14. O Krishna, I am convinced of all this that You say to Me, verily O Lord, neither the gods nor the anti-gods know Your identity.

Commentary

"Therefore, I deem all this to be a statement of facts as they are in reality, and not merely exaggerated praise, therefore, O Lord — neither the gods (devas) nor the jealous-gods (asuras) who possess limited knowledge know 'Your identity'— the ways in which You manifest Yourself."

svayam evātmanātmānaṃ vettha tvaṃ puruṣottama |
bhūta-bhāvana bhūteśa deva-deva jagat-pate || 15 ||

15. O Supreme Being, O Creator of beings, O Lord of beings, O God of gods, O Ruler of the universe, You Yourself know Yourself by Yourself.

vaktum arhasy-aśeṣeṇa divyā hyātma vibhūtayaḥ |
yābhir-vibhūtibhir lokān imāṃs tvaṃ vyāpya tiṣṭhasi || 16 ||

16. Kindly tell Me without reserve, of Your divine supernal manifestations whereby You abide pervading all these worlds.

What is the need for such description? The answer follows: —

katham vidyām ahaṃ yogiṃs tvāṃ sadā paricintayan |
keṣu keṣu ca bhāveṣu cintyo'si bhagavan mayā || 17 ||

17. O Almighty Lord, How can I, a Yogi, know You by constantly meditating on You? And in what forms are you to be contemplated upon by Me.

Commentary

How am I, as a Yogi engaged in the meditation of Bhakti Yoga, to know You, as the object of meditation, as fully possessing a multitude of auspicious attributes like sovereignty etc.? And what are the various psychological characteristics, which You have not yet mentioned, and which are different from the intelligence, discriminatory knowledge etc., mentioned previously?

vistareṇātmano yogaṃ vibhūtiṃ ca janārdana |
bhūyaḥ kathaya tṛptir hi śṛṇvato nāsti me'mṛtam || 18 ||

18. Tell me again in detail, O Krishna, about Your attributes and glories. For I am never satiated by hearing Your ambrosial words.

Commentary

"You briefly referred to your sovereignty and dominion in verse 10.8 — 'I am the origin of all; from Me proceed everything' . Please elaborate now on this and describe in what way You are the Creator and Controller of all".

śrī bhagavān uvāca

hanta te kathayiṣyāmi divyā hyātma vibhūtayaḥ |
prādhānyataḥ kuru-śreṣṭha nāsty-anto vistarasya me || 19 ||

The Blessed Lord said:
19. Gladly shall I relate to you, O Arjuna (Best of the Kurus), the most prominent of My divine personal expansions (Vibhūtis)— There is indeed no limit to their extent.

Commentary

The term '*pradhānya'* (most important) means those which are most pre-eminent, I shall reveal to you only those manifestations that are prominent because it would be impossible to recount or to listen to them in detail, because there is no limit to them.

A *Vibhuti* or manifestation referred to, is defined as "something under the control of the Lord"; because of the expository statement — 'He who in truth knows this supernal manifestation and the seat of auspicious attributes' (10.7), — made after listing the various kinds of psychological factors like intelligence etc., of all beings which arise from Krishna alone.

Similarly it has been stated there [in the commentary on 10:7] that the term Yoga refers to Krishna being the Supreme Creator and that the term Vibhuti refers to things 'being impelled' by Krishna. It is also confirmed by the statement: — 'I am the origin of all; from me proceed everything; thinking thus, the wise worship Me with all devotion' (10.8).

aham ātmā guḍākeśa sarva bhūtāśaya sthitaḥ |
aham ādiśca madhyaṃ ca bhūtānām anta eva ca || 20 ||

20. I am the Self, O Gudakesha (Arjuna —Conqueror-of-sleep), dwelling in the hearts of all beings. I verily am the beginning, the middle and also the end of all beings.

Commentary

I am the ātman seated in the hearts of all beings who constitute My corporeal manifestation (*sharira*). This is later confirmed in verses 15:15 & 18:61.

The Vedas also declare this (Br.Up., 3.7.21, 22).

Thus, I exist as the Self of all beings and I am their beginning, their middle and also their end which means I am the cause of their origination, sustentation and dissolution.

Thus, Sri Krishna explains the grammatical rule of Samānādhikaraṇya or co-ordinate predication by demonstrating His immanence in all beings, which are His manifestations having Him, as their Self. Sri Krishna proceeds to present some specific or distinguished manifestations in the same style of co-ordinate predication. As the Lord abides as the Self in all things, the final significance of all nouns culminates in Him alone. Nouns such as god, human, bird, tree etc., though signifying the respective physical forms of those

objects, ultimately refer to the Selves (atman) of those objects. Similarly, Krishna being the immanent Over-Self of each one of them is the basis for describing them in the manner of co-ordinate predication.

Concluding the discourse of Vibhūtis, Krishna says:— *"There is nothing, moving or unmoving, that can exist apart from Me"* (10:39). The fact that they are inseparable from Krishna and cannot exist independently because of being under His control has already been declared in the words "Everything proceeds from Me" (10:8).

ādityānām ahaṃ viṣṇur jyotiṣāṃ ravir-aṃśumān |
marīcir marutām asmi nakṣatrāṇām ahaṃ śaśī || *21* ||

21. Among the Adityas I am Vishnu, of luminaries I am the radiant Sun. Of the Maruts I am Marici, and among the constellations I am the Moon.

Commentary

Of the 27 lunar mansions (sub-divisions of the Zodiac), I am the Moon. The genitive case used here is not to specify one out of many included in a group; its use is the same as in statement— 'I am the consciousness in all beings' (10.22), I am the Moon who is the Lord of the lunar mansions [but not one of them].

vedānāṃ sāma-vedo'smi devānām asmi vāsavaḥ |
indriyāṇāṃ manaścāsmi bhūtānām asmi cetanā || 22 ||

22. Of the Vedas I am the Samaveda; I am Indra among the gods. Among sense-organs I am the Mind, and of sentient beings I am consciousness.

rudrāṇāṃ śaṅkaraścāsmi vitteśo yakṣa-rakṣasām |
vasūnāṃ pāvakaścāsmi meruḥ śikhariṇām aham || *23* ||

23. Of the Rudras I am Sankara; among the Yakshas and Rakshasa, I am the Lord of wealth (Kubera). Of the Vasus I am Agni; of the peaked mountains, I am Meru.

purodhasāṃ ca mukhyaṃ māṃ viddhi pārtha bṛhaspatim |
senānīnām ahaṃ skandaḥ sarasām asmi sāgaraḥ || *24* ||

24. Among domestic priests, O Arjuna, know Me to be their chief — Brhaspati. Among army generals, I am Skanda; among reservoirs of water, I am the ocean.

maharṣīṇāṃ bhṛgur ahaṃ girām-asmy-ekam akṣaram |
yajñānāṃ japa-yajño'smi sthāvarāṇāṃ himālāyaḥ || *25* ||

25. Among the great sages, I am Bhrgu; among words, I am the single syllable Om. Among sacrifices, I am the sacrifice of Japa and among immovable things I am the Himalayas.

Commentary

Of great seers like Marici (see note 3) etc., I am Bhrgu. Words are sounds that convey meaning, and of such words, I am the single syllable AUM. Of all sacrifices, I am the sacrifice of Japa (repetition of sacred formulae) which is the most prominent part of the sacrificial liturgy.

aśvatthaḥ sarva vṛkṣāṇāṃ devārṣīṇāṃ ca nāradaḥ |
gandharvāṇāṃ citrarathaḥ siddhānāṃ kapilo muniḥ || *26* ||

26. Of trees I am the Ashvattha; among celestial seers (deva-Rishis) I am Narada. Of the Gandharvas I am Citraratha and among the perfected beings, I am Kapila.

Commentary

Among those who have attained perfection in yoga I am the most venerable Kapila.

uccaiḥśravasam aśvānāṃ viddhi māṃ amṛtodbhavam |
airāvataṃ gajendrāṇāṃ narāṇāṃ ca narādhipam || 27 ||

27. Of horses know Me to be Uccaihshravas the nectar-born. Of lordly elephants, I am Airavata, and among humankind, I am the monarch.

Commentary

Uccaihshravas was the celestial horse born from the churning of the ocean of ambrosia. The king of elephants Airavata was also produced from the churning of the ocean [and given to Indra].

āyudhānām ahaṃ vajraṃ dhenūnām asmi kāmadhuk |
prajanaścāsmi kandarpaḥ sarpāṇām asmi vāsukiḥ || 28 ||

28. Among weapons, I am the Vajra (thunderbolt). Among cows, I am Kamadhuk; among progenitors, I am Kandarpa (the god of love). Of dragons, I am Vasuki .

Commentary

Kāmadhuk (or Kāma-dhenu) is the celestial wish-fulfilling cow Surabhi the greatest among the produces of milk for use in sacrifice. The god of love Kāma-deva is the cause of procreation. Sarpas are one-headed dragons.

anantaścāsmi nāgānāṃ varuṇo yādasām aham |
pitṛṇām aryamā cāsmi yamaḥ saṃyamatām aham || 29 ||

29. Amongst Nāgas, I am Ananta. Of aquatic-deities I am Varuna; of the manes, I am Aryama and among subduers, I am Yama.

Commentary

Nāgas are many-headed dragons. Yadamsi are the deities connected with water. Subduers are law-enforcers — Yama (the god of death) is the son of the sun-god Vivasvata.

prahlādaścāsmi daityānāṃ kālaḥ kalayatām aham |
mṛgāṇāṃ ca mṛgendro'haṃ vainateyaśca pakṣiṇām || 30 ||

30. Among Daityas, I am Prahlada and among reckoners I am Time [Kāla]. Of beasts, I am the lion, and of birds I am Garuda the son of Vinata.

Commentary

Of those who reckon with the desire to cause harm I am *Kāla*— here an emissary of Yama who records the time of death of creatures is meant.

pavanaḥ pavatām asmi rāmaḥ śastra-bhṛtām aham |
jhaṣāṇāṃ makaraś-cāsmi srotasām-asmi jāhnavī || 31 ||

31. Of moving things, I am the wind. Among warriors I am Rama; among fishes, I am the shark, and amongst rivers, I am Ganga.

Commentary

Among those who bear arms, I am Rama. Here the quality of "bearing weapons" is the actual Vibhuti, as no other sense is possible. Aditya and the others, being jivas, are 'attributes' of the Lord, who is their Over-Self as they constitute His corporeality. Therefore they stand in the same position of the attribute as that of bearing weapons.

sargāṇām ādir-antaśca madhyaṃ caivāham arjuna |
adhyātma vidyā vidyānāṃ vādaḥ pravadatām aham || 32 ||

32. In relation to beings, I am the beginning and the end, and also the middle, O Arjuna. Among sciences I am the science of the Self. In the discipline of debate, I am logical reasoning.

Commentary

Beings are all created things and I am their beginning or cause because I Myself am continually creating them. Similarly, I am the end, namely the destroyer of everything that is in the process of disintegration at all times. Similarly I am the middle, that is to say the sustainer of things that are being sustained at all times. Of those who investigate the truth through means of debate using the techniques of *Jalpa* (argument) and *Vitaṇḍa* (perverse criticism) etc., I am the technique of logical reasoning which determines the truth.

akṣarāṇām akāro'smi dvandavaḥ sāmāsikasya ca |
aham evākṣayaḥ kālo dhātā'haṃ viśvato mukhaḥ || 33 ||

33. Among the letters of the alphabet I am 'A'. I am the dual among compound words; I am Myself everlasting Time and I am the Creator, facing every direction.

Commentary

The letter "A" is the basis of all letters as established in the Veda: —

akaro vai sarva vak — The letter "A" itself is all speech (Ai. Ar. 3.2.3, Ai Up. 3:6).

Samasika means the entire collection of compound words of which I am the Dvandva (dual) compound; it is pre-eminent because the meanings of both constituent terms are equally important. I am Myself everlasting Time (Kāla) composed of divisions like hours and minutes etc. I am the four-faced Brahma who is the creator of all.

mṛtyuḥ sarva-haraś-cāham udbhavaśca bhaviṣyatām |
kīrtiḥ śrīr-vāk ca nārīṇāṃ smṛtir-medhā dhṛtiḥ kṣamā || 34 ||

34. I am Death among plunderers. I am the origin of all that shall be born. In women I am fame, prosperity, eloquence, memory, intelligence, endurance and forgiveness.

Commentary

I am also Death or *Mrtyu* [a servant of Yama] who snatches away the life of all beings. Of those beings that shall be born I am that activity called birthing. In women [ie among goddesses who are the Shaktis of the Lord] I am prosperity (*Śrī*); fame (*Kīrti*); eloquence (*Vāk*); memory (*Smṛti*); intelligence (*Medhā*); endurance (*Dhṛti*) and forgiveness (*Kṣamā*).

bṛhatsāma tathā sāmnāṃ gāyatrī chandasām aham |
māsānāṃ mārgaśīrṣo'ham ṛtūnāṃ kusumākaraḥ || 35 ||

35. Of the Sama hymns, I am the Brhatsaman hymn and I am the Gāyatri among meters. Of months, I am Margashirsha (November-December): and of seasons I am the season of flowers (spring).

dyūtaṃ chalayatām asmi tejas tejasvinām aham |
jayo'smi vyavasāyo'smi sattvaṃ sattvavatām aham || 36 ||

36. Of the fraudulent [activities], I am gambling. I am the brilliance of the brilliant, I am victory, I am effort, I am the magnanimity of the magnanimous.

Commentary

I am the industry of the industrious. I am the intellectual vigour of those who possess magnanimity of mind.

vṛṣṇīnāṃ vāsudevo'smi pāṇḍavānāṃ dhanañjayaḥ |
munīnām apy-ahaṃ vyāsaḥ kavīnām uśanā kaviḥ || 37 ||

37. Of the Vrshni [clan] I am Vasudeva. Of the Pandava [family] I am Arjuna. Among sages I am Vyasa and among seers, I am Ushana (Sukra).

Commentary

Here the pre-eminent *Vibhūti* (distinction) is that of being the son of Vasudeva, because no other meaning is possible. Of sons of Pandu, I am Dhanañjaya or Arjuna. Among those sages who achieve enlightenment through the process of meditation, I am Vyasa. The seers are those who are wise and learned — among them I am Sukra (Venus).

daṇḍo damayatām asmi nītir-asmi jigīṣatām |
maunaṃ caivāsmi guhyānāṃ jñānaṃ jñānavatām aham || 38 ||

38. Of disciplinarians, I am the principle of punishment. Among conquerors, I am diplomatic policy. Of secrets, I am verily silence; and of those who are wise, I am wisdom.

Commentary

I am the power of punishment of those who punish for law enforcement. In regard to those who seek ascendancy I am the diplomatic policy which is the [best] means of attaining success. Of factors associated with keeping secrecy, I am silence.

yaccāpi sarva bhūtānāṃ bījaṃ tad aham arjuna |
na tadasti vinā yat syān mayā bhūtaṃ carācaram || 39 ||

39. Whatever is the essence of all beings, O Arjuna, I am that. There is nothing mobile or immobile that can exist without Me.

Commentary

In whatever condition any being may exist, whether perceptible or not, I alone am the root cause of that state. There is not a single category of existing thing that can exist without Me as its Over-Self. In the statement — 'Nothing that moves or does not move exists without Me', it is reaffirmed that the Lord exists as the Self, just as He said in the beginning:— 'I am the Self, seated in the hearts of all beings' (10.20). The purport is that the entire host of entities in every state of being, is connected to Me, as their Over-Self. By this Krishna clarifies that His being the Self of all things, is the basis for the doctrine of co-ordinate predication — the doctrine that all words ultimately refer to Him alone.

nānto'sti mama divyānāṃ vibhūtīnāṃ parantapa |
eṣa tūddeśataḥ prokto vibhūter vistaro mayā || 40 ||

40. There is no limit to My divine glories O Arjuna (Scorcher-of-foes). Here I have only briefly adumbrated My Divine Manifestations.

yad yad vibhūtimat sattvaṃ śrīmad ūrjitam eva ca |
tat tad evāvagaccha tvaṃ mama tejo'ṃśa saṃbhavam || 41 ||

41. Know for certain that whatever has sovereignty, splendour and brilliance is produced by a mere fraction of My potency.

Commentary

Sovereignty is the capacity and means to control others; splendour refers to that which has beauty or prosperity in terms of wealth, grains etc., or has brilliance namely, is engaged in actions for the benefit of others — know such manifestations as coming from a mere fragment of My '*tejas'*. *Tejas* or Might is the capacity to overcome all opposition. The meaning is, know them as arising from a fraction of My inconceivable power of subjugation.

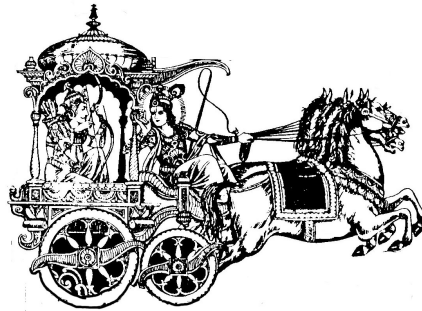
athavā bahunaitena kiṃ jñānena tavārjuna |
viṣṭabhyāham-idaṃ kṛtsnam ekāṃśena sthito jagat || 42 ||

42. But of what use to you is all this extensive knowledge, O Arjuna? I abide, sustaining this whole universe with but a fraction of Myself.

Commentary

As said by venerable Parashara:— 'On a fraction of the ten thousandth part of a ten thousandth part of this energy, the universe rests' (V.P., 1:9:53).

hariḥ oṃ tatsat
iti śrīmad bhagavadgītāsupaniṣatsu
brahma-vidyāyāṃ yoga-śāstre
śrī-kṛṣṇārjuna saṃvāde vibhūti-yogo nāma
daśamo'dhyāyaḥ

Thus in the Upanishads of the Glorious Bhagavad Gita
The science of the Eternal, the Scripture of Yoga
The dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna
Ends the tenth discourse entitled
"Manifestation of Divine Glories"

Chapter 11

Viśvarūpa Darśana Yogaḥ

The Vision of the Cosmic Form

Summary of the Teaching

Thus, for engendering Bhakti Yoga and helping to develop it, Sri Krishna taught that He is the Over-Self of all beings. He gave a narration of His unique auspicious attributes which characterize Him as different from all other entities. He also taught that the entire range of sentient and insentient beings which are likened to the corporeality or "body" of God, are completely dependant upon Him for their origin, existent and activity.

Having heard from Krishna of His marvelous and unique nature and activity; and being convinced of the truth of this revelation, Arjuna became desirous of directly perceiving these things and conveyed his longing to Krishna. By His grace, Arjuna was able to see Him as described in this chapter.

śrī arjuna uvāca

mad-anugrahāya paramaṃ guhyam adhyātma saṃjñitam |
yat tvayoktaṃ vacas tena moho-yaṃ vigato mama || *1* ||

Arjuna said.
1. Out of compassion for Me, You have personally revealed the most profound mystery concerning the jivatman; thereby this delusion of mine is completely dispelled.

bhavāpyayau hi bhūtānāṃ śrutau vistaraśo mayā |
tvattaḥ kamala-patrākṣa mahātmyam api cāvyayam || *2* ||

2. Indeed, I have heard in great detail about the origination and dissolution of all beings, O Krishna (Lotus-eyed-one), as issuing forth from You; as also about Your inexhaustible excellence.

evam etad yathāttha tvam-ātmānaṃ parameśvara |
draṣṭum icchāmi te rūpam aiśvaraṃ puruṣottama || *3* ||

3. O Supreme Lord, I long to actually see Your Sovereign form, exactly as You Yourself have described it, O Supreme-person.

Commentary

"O ocean of compassion for those who take refuge in You. I accept everything that You have declared about yourself, however, I wish to see it; to realise it directly, Your sovereign and unique manifestation — Your form as the ruler, protector, creator, destroyer, supporter of all, the mine of auspicious attributes, supreme and distinct from all other entities."

manyase yadi tacchakyaṃ mayā draṣṭum iti prabho |
yogeśvara tato me tvaṃ darśayāmānam avyayam || *4* ||

4. If you consider, O Lord, that I am capable, then reveal Yourself completely to me, O Lord of Yoga in that imperishable form.

Commentary

"If You think that Your form as all-creator, as all-ruler and as all-supporter, can be seen by me, then, O Lord of Yoga — Yoga referring to having omniscience and all other auspicious attributes — knowledge, strength, sovereignty, valour, power and glory which are inconceivable in any one else but You! Reveal Yourself to me completely." '*Avyayam*' (completely) is an adverb the meaning of which is: 'Reveal everything about Yourself to me.'

śrī bhagavān uvāca

paśya me pārtha rūpāṇi śataśo'tha sahasraśaḥ |
nānā vidhāni divyāni nānā varṇā kṛtīni ca || *5* ||

The Blessed Lord said:
5. Behold My forms, O Arjuna (Partha), hundreds upon thousands of them, manifold, divine, varied in hue and shape,

paśyādityān vasūn rudrān aśvinau marutas tathā |
bahūny-adṛṣṭa-pūrvāṇi paśyāścaryāṇi bhārata || *6* ||

6. Behold the Adityas, the Vasus, the Rudras, the two Ashvins and the Maruts. Behold, O Arjuna, many marvels never seen before.

Commentary

"Behold in My single form the twelve Adityas, eight Vasus, eleven Rudras, the two Ashvins and forty-nine Maruts." — this is merely illustrative the meaning being — "Behold all those things directly perceived in this world and those described in the Scriptures, and also many marvels, not seen before in all the worlds and not mentioned in any of the Scriptures."

ihaikasthaṃ jagat kṛtsnaṃ paśyādya sacarācaram |
mama dehe guḍākeśa yac cānyad draṣṭum icchasi || *7* ||

7. Behold here, O Arjuna (Conqueror-of-sleep), the whole universe with its mobile and immobile things centered in My body and whatever else you desire to see.

Commentary

'Here' — in this single "body" of Mine, and even here, gathered together in a single spot, behold the universe with all moving and non-moving entities. Whatever else you desire to see (ie., Arjuna's chances of victory), behold that also in one part of this single body.

na tu māṃ śakyase draṣṭum anenaiva sva-cakṣuṣā |
divyaṃ dadāmi te cakṣuḥ paśya me yogam aiśvaram || *8* ||

8. But you will not be able to see Me with your physical eye. I (therefore) give you clairvoyance — behold My Sovereign Glory!

sañjaya uvāca

evam uktvā tato rājan mahāyogeśvaro hariḥ |
darśayāmāsa pārthāya paramaṃ rūpam aiśvaram || *9* ||

Sañjaya said:
9. Having spoken thus, O King, Sri Krishna, the great Lord of Yoga, then revealed to Arjuna the supreme Sovereign Form.

Commentary

Sri Krishna who is Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Brahman presently incarnated as Arjuna's cousin and seated as a charioteer in his chariot — showed Arjuna, the son of Pritha — His paternal aunt (the sister of Vasudeva — Krishna's father), that Sovereign Form, personal and unique, which is the ground of the entire universe, manifold and wonderful, and which rules over everything. And that form appeared like this: —

aneka vaktra nayanam anekādbhuta darśanam |
aneka divyābharaṇaṃ divyānekodyatāyudham || 10 ||

10. With innumerable mouths and eyes, many astonishing aspects, many divine ornaments and brandishing many divine weapons.

divya mālyāmbaradharaṃ divya gandhānulepanam |
sarvāścaryam ayaṃ devam anantaṃ viśvato-mukham || 11 ||

11. Wearing celestial garlands and raiment, anointed with divine perfumes, full of all wonders, resplendent, boundless and facing all directions.

Commentary

'*Divyam*' means 'resplendent'. '*Anantam*' (boundless) means that form was not limited by time and space because of its being the foundation of the entire universe in the past, present and future, '*Viśvatomukham*' means extending into all directions.

Sañjaya explains the same resplendence expressed by the term 'Divyam':

divi sūrya sahasrasya bhaved yugapad utthitā |
yadi bhāḥ sadṛśī sā syād bhāsas tasya mahātmanaḥ || 12 ||

12. If a thousand suns were to rise at once in the sky, the resulting magnificence may be (somewhat) like the effulgence of that mighty One.

Commentary

This statement illustrates the infinitude of His refulgence. The meaning is that this manifestation (theophany) was of the nature of expansive light.

tatraikasthaṃ jagat kṛtsnaṃ pravibhaktam enekadhā |
apaśyad deva-devasya śarīre pāṇḍavas tadā || 13 ||

13. There [in that form] Arjuna beheld the entire universe, with its manifold divisions gathered together in one single point within the body of the God of gods.

tataḥ sa vismayāviṣṭo hṛṣṭa-romā dhanañjayaḥ |
praṇamya śirasā devaṃ kṛtāñjalir abhāṣata || 14 ||

14. Then Arjuna (Dhananjaya), overcome with amazement, his hair standing on end, bowed his head to the Lord, and with palms pressed together spoke.

arjuna uvāca
paśyāmi devāṃs tava deva dehe sarvāṃs tathā bhūta viśeṣa saṅghān |
brahmāṇam īśaṃ kamalāsanastham ṛṣiṃśca sarvān uragāṃśca divyān || 15 ||

Arjuna said:
15. I behold, O Lord, in Your body all the gods and all the diverse hosts of beings, Brahma, Siva who is in Brahma, the sages and the gleaming serpents.

Commentary

"O Lord! I can see in Your Cosmic Body all the gods and every category of living being as also Brahma, the four-faced creator of the universe. So too, Siva (*īśam kamalāsanastham*) who abides in the lotus-seated-Brahma; meaning that Siva follows the instructions of Brahma. So also all the seers of whom the divine seers are the foremost; and refulgent dragons like Vasuki, Takshaka etc.

aneka bāhūdara vaktra netraṃ paśyāmi tvāṃ sarvato'nanta rūpam |
nāntaṃ na madhyaṃ na punastavādiṃ paśyāmi viśveśvara viśvarūpa || 16 ||

16. With manifold arms, torsos, mouths and eyes, I behold Your infinite form on all sides. I see no end, nor middle nor yet the beginning of You, O Lord of the universe, O Universal Form!

kirīṭinaṃ gadinaṃ cakriṇaṃ ca tejorāśiṃ sarvato dīptimantam |
paśyāmi tvāṃ durnirīkṣyaṃ samantād dīptānalārka-dyutim aprameyam || 17 ||

17. I behold You with crown, mace and discus, as an expanse of light radiating everywhere, hard to look at, blazing like a burning fire and the sun, and immeasurable.

tvam akṣaraṃ paramaṃ veditavyaṃ tvam-asya viśvasya paraṃ nidhānam |
tvam-avyayaḥ śāśvata dharma goptā sanātanas tvaṃ puruṣo mato me || 18 ||

18. You are the Imperishable, Supreme One to be realised. You are the Supreme Substratum of this universe. You are immutable; the Guardian of the Eternal Law (Dharma), I know You are the Eternal Supreme Being.

anādi madhyāntam ananta-vīryam ananta bāhuṃ śaśi-sūrya netram |
paśyami tvāṃ dīpta hutāśa vaktraṃ sva-tejasā viśvam idaṃ tapantam || 19 ||

19. I behold You without beginning, middle and end. Your creative potency is infinite and You are endowed with a countless number of arms. The sun and moon are Your eyes and Your mouth is emitting blazing fire and searing the entire universe with your radiance.

Commentary

"I visualise You [expanding] without beginning, middle and end. Your creative might is infinite and of unsurpassed excellence." Here the term 'virya' is illustrative of the six divine attributes of knowledge, energy, sovereignty, creative potency, power and splendour. 'Your arms are countless' — this too is illustrative, implying that the Lord has an infinite number of arms, torsos, feet, faces etc. 'The sun and moon are Your eyes'— all Your eyes are like the Moon and the Sun, beaming with Grace (Moon) and Justice (Sun). The Grace is directed towards the devotees like the Devas who offer salutations etc., and Justice is directed against Asuras, Rakshasas etc., who are opposed to them. 'Your mouth is emitting blazing fire' — namely, the fire of ultimate cosmic destruction, as the Fire of Time consumes the world at the time of final dissolution. 'With Your radiance You are searing the entire universe' — by radiance (Tejas) is meant the power to vanquish others. I behold You 'burning' or governing the universe with Your own radiance.

dyāvāpṛthivyor idam antaraṃ hi vyāptaṃ tvayaikena diśaśca sarvāḥ |
dṛṣṭvādbhutaṃ rūpam idaṃ tavograṃ loka trayaṃ pravyathitaṃ mahātman || 20 ||

20. The inter-space between heaven and earth, and all the directions are filled by You alone. Beholding Your spectacular and awesome form, O Mahatman, the three worlds are greatly overwhelmed with apprehension.

Commentary

The terms, *'heaven and earth,'* imply all the higher and the lower realms as well. The *'Antara'*, or that which is between heaven and earth, denotes the infinite space in which all the worlds are located. You alone pervade all the space in all directions. *'Beholding Your spectacular and awesome form,'* — seeing Your Manifestation of infinite length and extent, marvellous and terrible. *'The three worlds are trembling'* — All the Devas headed by Brahma, the Asuras, the Manes (ancestors), the Siddhas, the Gandharvas, the Yakshas, and Rakshasas have all come to see the battle;— all the *'three realms'* consisting of all these friendly, antagonistic and neutral beings are extremely frightened. *'Mahātman'* means one whose mind cannot be fathomed. It must be understood that like Arjuna, other celestial beings also were granted clairvoyance by the Lord for directly perceiving the Cosmic Theophany which supports the universe. If it be asked to what end, the reply is that it was for demonstrating to Arjuna His supreme majesty [and His power to affect the entire universe]. Hence it is stated here: 'Beholding Your marvelous and terrible form, O Mahatman, the three worlds are greatly overwhelmed with fear.'

amī hi tvāṃ surasaṅghā viśanti kecid bhītāḥ prāñjalayo gṛṇanti |
svastītyuktvā maharṣi siddha-saṅghāḥ stuvanti tvāṃ stutibhiḥ puṣkalābhiḥ || *21* ||

21. Verily into You the hosts of Devas enter. Some fearfully extol You with palms joined. The hosts of great sages and Siddhas praise You with perfect eulogies saying "Hail to You."

rudrādityā vasavo ye ca sādhyā viśve'śvinau marutaścoṣmapāśca |
gandharva yakṣāsura siddha-saṅghā vīkṣante tvāṃ vismitāścaiva sarve || 22 ||

22. The Rudras, the Adityas, the Vasus, the Sadhyas, the Vishvedevas, the Ashvins, the Maruts and the Manes, and the hosts of Gandharvas, Yakshas, Asuras, and Siddhas — all gaze upon You in amazement.

Commentary

Uṣmapa (hot drinkers) means ancestors [manes], because the Veda declares:

"verily the manes receive the hot portions of the offerings" (Tai. Br.1.3.10).

rūpaṃ mahatte bahu vaktra netraṃ mahābāho bahu-bāhūru-pādam |
bahūdaraṃ bahu daṃṣṭrā-karālaṃ dṛṣṭvā lokāḥ pravyathitās tathāham || *23* ||

23. Beholding Your almighty manifestation with many faces and eyes with many arms, thighs, and feet, with many torsos and dreadful with many fangs, all beings including myself are terrified, O Mighty-Armed.

nabhaḥ-spṛśaṃ dīptam aneka varṇaṃ vyāttānanaṃ dīpta viśāla-netram |
dṛṣṭvā hi tvāṃ pravyathitāntarātmā dhṛtiṃ na vindāmi śamaṃ ca viṣṇo || *24* ||

24. On seeing You, O Vishnu, touching the highest Heaven, refulgent, multi-coloured with gaping mouths and huge glaring eyes, I am extremely agitated to my inmost being, I have lost all composure and peace.

Commentary

The term *'Nabhas'* denotes the Supreme Heaven (*Parama Vyoman*) which is beyond the Material Nature (Prakrti) composed of the three Gunas as established by the Vedic passages such as:—

'That is in the Imperishable Supreme Heaven' (Ma. Na. Up.1;2)
'He, refulgent as the Sun and beyond darkness' (Sve. Up. 3.8, Taitt. Aran. 3:12:9)
The dweller beyond the Rajas' (Rg Sam, 2.6.25.5, Taitt. Sam 2:12:5) and
'He who is the president in the Highest Heaven' (Rg Sam. 10:129:7).

> This fact is implied in the statement that 'the form touches the Supreme Heaven.' It expresses the idea that this Cosmic Theophany is the foundation of all — of the Principle, of the Prakrti with its modifications, and of the individual Jivatmas in all their states.

daṃṣṭrā-karālāni ca te mukhāni dṛṣṭvaiva kālānala sannibhāni |
diśo na jāne na labheca śarma prasīda deveśa jagannivāsa || 25 ||

25. Seeing Your mouths with awesome fangs and appearing like the fire of Cosmic Annihilation, I am completely disorientated and confused. Have mercy on me, O Lord of the Devas! O Abode of the universe!

Commentary

> Krishna, acting as Arjuna's charioteer (*Pārthasārathi*), having thus shown that all the worlds depend upon Him for their existence and activities, proceeded to reveal to the son of Pritha (Arjuna) that He was using him as a mere instrument. Krishna's true agenda was to lighten the burden of the earth through the destruction of all those, who in the guise of princes, were presenting themselves as the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and their followers, but were actually partial Asuric manifestations. Many such embodiments of Asuras were present also in the ranks of Yudhiṣṭhira's followers. And Arjuna, after having perceived by clairvoyance received through Krishna's grace, the complete Theophany of the Lord as the Creator etc., witnessed also the slaughter of the entourage of the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and others — within the cosmic form of that very Lord Himself, who is the Self of all, even though the slaughter had not yet taken place — Arjuna continues:—

amī ca tvaṃ dhṛtarāṣṭrasya putrāḥ sarve sahaivāvanipāla saṅghaiḥ |
bhīṣmo droṇaḥ sūta-putras tathāsau sahāsmadīyairapi yodha-mukhyaiḥ || 26 ||

26. All these sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra together with the hordes of Kings, Bhishma, Drona and Karṇa along with the leading warriors of our side,

vaktrāṇi te tvaramāṇā viśanti daṃṣṭrā-karālāni bhayānakāni |
kecid vilagnā daśanāntareṣu saṅdṛśyante cūrṇitair-uttamāṅgaiḥ || 27 ||

27. hasten to enter into Your fearful mouths with terrible fangs, some caught between the teeth, are seen with their heads crushed to powder

yathā nadīnāṃ bahavo'mbuvegāḥ samudram evābhimukhā dravanti |
tathā tavāmī naraloka vīrā viśanti vaktrāṇyabhito jvalanti || 28 ||

28. As the many rivers in torrents flow towards the ocean, so do these heroes of the world of men enter Your blazing mouths.

yathā pradīptaṃ jvalanaṃ pataṅgā viśanti nāśāya samṛddha-vegāḥ |
tathaiva nāśāya viśanti lokās tavāpi vaktrāṇi samṛddha-vegāḥ || 29 ||

29. As moths rush irresistibly into a blazing fire to their destruction, so do these men madly rush into Your mouths to meet their destruction.

lelihyase grasamānaḥ samantāllokān samagrān vadanair jvaladbhiḥ |
tejobhir āpūrya jagat samagraṃ bhāsas tavogrāḥ pratapanti viṣṇoḥ || 30 ||

30. O Vishnu! Devouring all the worlds on every side with your flaming mouths, You lick them up. Your brilliant rays scorch the whole universe, filling it with their radiance.

ākhyāhi me ko bhavān-ugra-rūpo namo'stu te deva-vara prasīda |
vijñātum icchāmi bhavantam-ādyaṃ na hi prajānāmi tava pravṛttim || 31 ||

31. O Fearsome One! Tell me who You are ! Salutations to You, O Supreme God. Be gracious, I desire to know You, the Original One. I do not comprehend Your activity.

Commentary

Lord Krishna is being asked — 'What exactly is Your intention in assuming this terrible form while revealing Your universal sovereignty out of overwhelming love for one who has taken refuge in You'.

śrī bhagavān uvāca
kālo'smi loka-kṣaya-kṛt pravṛddho lokān samāhartum iha pravṛttaḥ |
ṛte'pi tvāṃ na bhaviṣyanti sarve ye'vasthitāḥ pratyanīkeṣu yodhāḥ || 32 ||
The Blessed Lord said:
32. I am Time, the mighty force which destroys everything, fully Manifesting Myself, I am here engaged in destroying the worlds. Even without you, none of the warriors arrayed in the enemy ranks shall survive.

Commentary

Kāla (Time) is the 'reckoner' which calculates (*kalayati*). Calculating the end of the lives of all those under the leadership of Dhrtarashtra's sons, I am causing their destruction.

tasmāt tvam uttiṣṭha yaśo labhasva jitvā śatrūn bhuṅkṣva rājyaṃ samṛddham |
mayaivaite nihatāḥ pūrvam eva nimitta-pātraṃ bhava savyasācin || 33 ||

33. Therefore arise, win glory! Conquering your foes, enjoy a prosperous kingdom. They have verily already been slain by Me; act merely as an instrument, O Arjuna, you great Archer (savyasācin)!

Commentary

"Be merely an instrument (nimitta) of Mine in destroying them — just like a weapon in My hand. O Savyasācin!" The root '*Sac*' means 'fastening' — a '*savyasācin*' is one who is capable of fixing or discharging a arrow even with his left hand; in other words Arjuna is so dexterous that he can fight with a bow in either hand.

droṇaṃ ca bhīṣmaṃ ca jayadrathaṃ ca karṇaṃ tathā'nyānapi yodhavīrān |
mayā hatāṃs-tvaṃ jahi mā vyathiṣṭhā yudhyasva jetāsi raṇe sapatnān || 34 ||

34. Slay Drona, Bhīṣma, Jayadratha, Karṇa as well as other mighty warriors, who have been destroyed by Me. Do not vacillate, fight! You shall surely conquer your opponents in the battle.

Commentary

"Kill Drona, Bhīṣma, Karṇa etc., who have already been singled out for destruction by Me alone, for they have transgressed the law of righteousness. Be not be unsettled by considering; 'How can I slay these teachers, relations and others who are attached to enjoyment?' Don't be thus distressed by thinking about the right and wrong of it, or expressing love and compassion for them. These persons are guilty of unrighteousness by siding with the evil-minded Duryodhana. They have been judged and condemned by Me alone. Therefore fight without hesitation, and you shall conquer your enemies in battle. In slaying them, there is not the slightest trace of rancor." The purport is that victory is the certain result.

sañjaya uvāca

etacchrutvā vacanaṃ keśavasya kṛtāñjalir vepamānaḥ kirīṭī |
namaskṛtvā bhūya evāha kṛṣṇaṃ sagadgadaṃ bhītabhītaḥ praṇamya || 35 ||

Sanjaya said:

35. Having heard this speech of Sri Krishna, Arjuna [the crowned one] prostrated himself and trembling with awe, he bowed down again, and with cupped-palms, and trembling, he spoke to Krishna in a choked voice.

arjuna uvāca

sthāne hṛṣīkeśa tava prakīrtyā jagat prahṛṣyaty-anurajyate ca |
rakṣāṃsi bhītāni diśo dravanti sarve namasyanti ca siddha-saṅghāḥ || 36 ||

Arjuna said:

36. Rightly it is, O Krishna, that the world is delighted and rejoices in singing Your praise. The terrified demons (Rakshasas) flee in all directions, and all the hosts of the perfected ones (Siddhas) bow down to You.

Commentary

Sthāne means 'rightly so' or 'it is but proper' that the whole world of gods, Gandharvas, Siddhas, Yakṣas, Kinnaras, Kiṃpuruṣas etc., who have assembled here with a desire to see the battle, should be delighted with You and love You, after seeing You, by Your grace, as the Lord of the Universe.

Rightly so, after beholding You, the Rakṣasas flee in fear in all directions, and rightly so, all the host of Siddhas, namely, the host of perfected beings who are favourable to You, pay their homage to You. The connection with what was said earlier is that all this is as it ought to be. Arjuna further proceeds to explain how all this is right: —

kasmācca te na nameran mahātman garīyase brahmaṇo'pyādikartre |
ananta deveśa jagan-nivāsa tvam akṣaraṃ sadasat tatparaṃ yat || 37 ||

37. And why should they not, O Mahātman, bow down to You who are Great One, being the first Creator, even of Brahma? O Infinite One, Lord of gods, O You who have the universe for Your abode! You are the imperishable individual Self, the existent and the non-existent, and that which is beyond both.

Commentary

O Boundless One, O God of the gods, O You who have the universe for Your dwelling place! You are Akṣara — 'that which does not perish' — here it refers to the principle of individual Self (jivātman); for the individual Self does not perish as established in Vedic passages:—

'The intelligent Self is not born, nor dies' (Ka.Up. 2.18).

You alone are 'the existent and the non-existent' — the Principle of Material Nature (Prakrti), in its condition as effect and cause are denoted by the terms 'Sat' (existent) and 'Asat' (non-existent). The state of effect denoted by the term 'Sat', is the state of diversification by names and forms. The causal state denoted by the term 'Asat', is the state incapable of such divisions. 'That which is beyond both'— that which is beyond Prakrti and the individual Selves associated with the Prakrti, namely, the principle of liberated Selves who are different from those bound by Prakrti. You alone are that also.

tvam ādidevaḥ puruṣaḥ purāṇas-tvam asya viśvasya paraṃ nidhānam |
vettāsi vedyaṃ ca paraṃ ca dhāma tvayā tataṃ viśvam ananta rūpa || 38 ||

38 You are the Original Godhead and the Ancient Person. You are the Supreme support of the universe. You are the knower and the knowable, and the Supreme goal. By You, O Lord of infinite forms, is this universe pervaded.

> *vāyur-yamo'gnir-varuṇaḥ śaśāṅkaḥ prajāpatis-tvaṃ prapitā-mahaśca |*
> *namo namaste'stu sahasra-kṛtvaḥ punaśca bhūyo'pi namo namaste || 39 ||*

39. You are Vayu, Yama, Agni, Varuna the Moon, Prajapati and the great-grandsire; salutations, salutations unto You, a thousand times! Hail unto You again and yet again! salutations, salutations unto You!

Commentary

> The Prajāpatis (such as Dakṣa and the other 7 mind-born sons of Brahma) are the progenitors of all creatures. Hiranyagarbha [Brahma], the father of the Prajāpatis, is the grandfather of all creatures. You, being the father of even Hiranyagarbha, are the great grandfather of all creatures. You alone are denoted by the various names by which these beings are known — such is the meaning.

> *namaḥ purastād atha pṛṣṭhas-te namo'stu te sarvata eva sarva |*
> *ananta-vīryāmita-vikramas-tvaṃ sarvaṃ samāpnoṣi tato'si sarvaḥ || 40 ||*

40. Obeisance to You from before and behind! Obeisance to You in all directions, O You who are the All! O You of Infinite prowess and measureless heroism! You pervade all beings and therefore are the All.

Commentary

> "You, of power without limit and unrestrained heroism, pervade all beings as their very Self and therefore, are, in reality all of them." The meaning is that all terms, naming other entities, are ultimately referring to Krishna: for all beings, both sentient as well as non-sentient, constitute Krishna's expressions or modes.

> *sakheti matvā prasabhaṃ yaduktaṃ he kṛṣṇa he yādava he sakheti |*
> *ajānatā mahimānaṃ tavedaṃ mayā pramādāt praṇayena vāpi || 41 ||*

41. Unaware of Your majesty, and either from negligence or affection, considering You to be a friend, whatever I have presumptuously said, addressing You as; O Krishna, O Yādava, O friend,

> *yaccāvahāsārtham asatkṛto 'si vihāra śayyāsana bhojaneṣu |*
> *eko'thavāpy acyuta tat-samakṣaṃ tat kṣāmaye tvām aham aprameyam || 42 ||*

42. …. and for whatever disrespect I have shown to You in jest, while playing, resting, while sitting or eating together, while alone or in the presence of others, O Achyuta— I implore Your forgiveness, for You are incomprehensible.

> *pitāsi lokasya carācarasya tvam-asya pūjyaśca gurur garīyān |*
> *na tvat samo'sty abhyadhikaḥ kuto'nyo lokatraye'py apratima-prabhāva || 43 ||*

43. You are the father of this world, of all mobile and stationary entities. You are its teacher and the one most worthy of reverence. There is none equal to You. How then could there be another greater than You in the three realms, O Being of unsurpassed glory?

> *tasmāt praṇamya praṇidhāya kāyaṃ prasādaye tvām aham īśam īḍyam |*
> *piteva putrasya sakheva sakhyuḥ priyaḥ priyāyārhasi deva soḍhum || 44 ||*

44. Therefore, bowing down, prostrating myself, I beg Your pardon, O adorable Lord. As a father forebears with his son or a friend with his friend, it is proper, O Lord, that You, who are dear to me, should bear with me who am dear to You.

adṛṣṭa-pūrvaṃ hṛṣito'smi dṛṣṭvā bhayena ca pravyathitaṃ mano me |
tadeva me darśaya deva rūpaṃ prasīda deveśa jagannivāsa || 45 ||

45. O Lord! I am delighted that I have seen what has never been seen before, but my mind is overwhelmed with anxiety. Show me Your other form, O Lord of the gods! Be gracious, O Abode of the universe!

kirīṭinaṃ gadinaṃ cakra-hastam-icchāmi tvāṃ draṣṭum ahaṃ tathaiva |
tenaiva rūpeṇa catur-bhujena sahasra-bāho bhava viśvamūrte || 46 ||

46. I wish to see You ever as before, wearing a crown and holding a mace and discus in hand. Assume again that four-armed form, O Thousand-armed one, of Universal Form!

śrī bhagavān uvāca
mayā prasannena tavārjunedaṃ rūpaṃ paraṃ darśitam ātma yogāt |
tejomayaṃ viśvam anantam ādyaṃ yan me tvad anyena na dṛṣṭa-pūrvam || 47 ||

The Blessed Lord said:
47. By My grace, O Arjuna, this Supreme Manifestation, luminous, cosmic, infinite, primal, which has never seen before by anyone but you, has been revealed to you through My divine potency.

na veda yajñādhyayanair na dānair na ca kriyābhir-na tapobhir-ugraiḥ |
evaṃ rūpaḥ śakya ahaṃ nṛloke draṣṭuṃ tvadanyena kuru-pravīra || 48 ||

48. Neither through the study of the Vedas, nor by sacrifices, nor by recital of the Scriptures, nor by charity, nor by rituals, nor by strict austerities can I be realised in a manifestation like this in this mortal world by any one else but you, O Arjuna!

Commentary

"In this form, which represents Me as I really am, I cannot be realised by such means as the study of the Vedas, sacrifices etc., by anyone who is devoid of exclusive Bhakti towards Me or by any one other than yourself who are fully devoted to Me."

mā te vyathā mā ca vimūḍha bhāvo dṛṣṭvā rūpaṃ ghoram īdṛṅ-mamedam |
vyapetabhīḥ prīta-manāḥ punas tvaṃ tad eva me rūpam idaṃ prapaśya || 49 ||

49. You need not fear any more, nor be perplexed by looking on this awesome manifestation of Mine. Free from fear and with a gladdened heart, behold again that other form of Mine.

sañjaya uvāca
ityarjunaṃ vāsudevas tathoktvā svakaṃ rūpaṃ darśayāmāsa bhūyaḥ |
āśvāsayāmāsa ca bhītam-eva bhūtvā punaḥ saumya vapur mahātmā || 50 ||
Sanjaya said:
50. Having spoken thus to Arjuna, Sri Krishna revealed to him once more His own form. The Great-minded One, assuming again a benign form, reassured him who was terrified.

Commentary

Having a four-armed form alone is proper for this Lord of all, the Supreme Being, the Supreme Brahman, who has assumed the human form as the son of Vasudeva for blessing this world. But, [at birth] in answer to the prayer of Vasudeva, who was terrified by Kamsa, the two extra arms were withdrawn until the death of Kamsa, thereafter they reappeared. Vasudeva prayed thus: —

> 'You are born, O Lord, O God of gods, withdraw this form bearing conch, discus and mace out of grace ...... withdraw this form of four arms, O Self of all' (V.P., 5.3.10 and 12).

Even for Sisupala, who hated Krishna, this four-armed form alone was the objective of constant contemplation, as described—

> 'Him who is of four long and robust arms, bearing the conch, discus and the mace' (V.P., 4.15.8).

arjuna uvāca

dṛṣṭvedaṃ mānuṣaṃ rūpaṃ tava saumyaṃ janārdana |
idānīm asmi saṃvṛttaḥ sa cetāḥ prakṛtiṃ gataḥ || 51 ||

Arjuna said:
51. Having beheld the human and benign form of Yours, O Krishna, I have now become composed in mind and I am restored to my normal state.

śrī bhagavān uvāca

sudurdarśam idaṃ rūpaṃ dṛṣṭavān asi yan mama |
devā apy asya rūpasya nityam darśana-kāṅkṣaṇaḥ || 52 ||

The Blessed Lord said:
52. It is extremely difficult to behold this manifestation of Mine which you have seen. Even the gods ever long to behold this manifestation.

nāhaṃ vedair na tapasā na dānena na cejyayā |
śakya evaṃ vidho draṣṭuṃ dṛṣṭavān asi yan mama || 53 ||

53. Not through the Vedas, nor by austerities, nor by charity, nor by the performance of sacrifices, can I be seen in such a form as You have seen Me.

bhaktyā tv-ananyayā śakya aham evaṃ vidho 'rjuna |
jñātuṃ draṣṭuṃ ca tattvena praveṣṭuṃ ca paraṅtapa || 54 ||

54. But by single-minded devotion, O Arjuna, it is possible to truly know, to see and to enter into Me, who am of this form, O harasser of foes!

Commentary

'Through the Vedas' — by mere study, exposition, teaching, hearing and reciting these sacred texts, it is not possible to know Me as I really am. It is also not possible to know Me in truth through Vedic sacrifices, charity, making daily offerings and performing austerities, devoid of devotion towards Me. But with single-minded devotion it is possible to know Me accurately through the Scriptures, to behold Me directly, and enter into Me in reality. Accordingly there is a Vedic verse:—

> 'This Self cannot be obtained by instruction, nor by intellectualising nor by much hearing. Whomsoever He chooses, by Him alone is He obtained. To such a one He reveals His own form' (Ka. Up., 2.2.23) and (Mu. Up., 3.2.3).

mat karma-kṛn mat-paramo mad-bhaktaḥ saṅga-varjitaḥ |
nivairaḥ sarva bhūteṣu yaḥ sa māmeti pāṇḍava || 55 ||

55. Whosoever serves Me, regards Me as the highest and is devoted to Me, free from attachment and devoid of malice towards any creature, comes to Me, O Arjuna.

Commentary

"Whosoever performs all [obligatory] acts like the study of the Vedas considering them merely as different modes of service (kainkaryam) — he is one who truly serves Me. 'He who regards Me as the highest,' — namely, one to whom I alone am the highest purpose in all his doings, has Me as the highest goal. 'He who is devoted to me,'— that is, so devoted to Me that he is unable to exist without chanting My names, praising Me, meditating upon Me, worshiping Me, bowing down to Me etc., He who does these things, always considering Me as the supreme goal — he is My devotee. He is 'free from attachments,' as he is attached to Me alone, and is therefore unable to develop attachment to any other entity. He who is without ill-will towards any being, is one who fulfils all the following conditions —

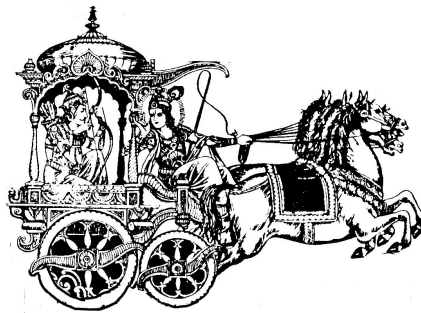
(a) his nature is to feel pleasure or pain solely on account of his union or separation from Me;

(b) he considers his own transgressions (karma) to be the sole cause of his suffering (and not the work of others);

(c) he is confirmed in his faith that all beings are co-dependent on the Supreme Being. For all these reasons he can have no hatred for any being."

He who has developed these qualities comes to me, that is, attains Me as I really am. The purport is that free from the least trace of ignorance and delusion, free of all faults, he becomes one who experiences Me alone.

hariḥ oṃ tatsat
iti śrīmad bhagavadgītāsupaniṣatsu
brahma-vidyāyāṃ yoga-śāstre
śrī-kṛṣṇārjuna saṃvāde viśvarūpa darśana yogo nāma
ekādaśo'dhyāyaḥ

Thus in the Upanishads of the Glorious Bhagavad Gita
The science of the Eternal, the Scripture of Yoga
The dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna
Ends the eleventh discourse entitled
"Vision of the Cosmic Form"

Chapter 12

Bhakti Yogaḥ

Communion through Devotion

Summary of the Teaching

Arjuna desired to directly experience the unrestricted glory of Lord Nārāyaṇa — the Supreme Brahman, who is the ultimate goal of all who practice Bhakti Yoga. Lord Nārāyaṇa, revealed this to him, because He is one whose intentions are always accomplished, and who is an ocean of positive attributes like compassion, generosity, affability and others which are all limitless in their excellence. It has also been taught that real knowledge of, perception of, and the attainment of the Lord can only be obtained by single-minded and persistent devotion.

After this the following points will be explained:

(1) Meditation on the Lord through the medium of Bhakti
(2) the superiority of such meditation over that [of meditation] on the Ātman, because of its rapid fulfilment,
(3) the great ease of its practice;
(4) the method of meditation on the Lord
(5) the practice of contemplation on the Ātman for one who is incapable of meditating on the Lord,
(6) the requirements thereof.

The reason that meditation on the Lord is superior [to meditation on the Ātman] is because of the superiority of the subject of meditation [the Lord Himself] as declared in:— And among all the Yogis and also with all others, one whose inner self is directed to Me, who worships Me with faith — such a one is deemed by Me to be the most accomplished. (6.47).

arjuna uvāca

evaṃ satata-yuktā ye bhaktās-tvāṃ paryupāsate |
ye cāpyakṣaram-avyaktaṃ teṣāṃ ke yoga-vittamāḥ || *1* ||

Arjuna said:
1. Of those devotees, who, ever integrated with You, meditate on You thus, and of those again, who meditate on the imperishable and the unmanifest — which of these have greater knowledge of Yoga?

Commentary

"There are those devotees who considering You and none other as the supreme goal, worship You in complete dedication — as one who is the ocean of attributes of limitless excellence like grace, affability, omniscience, accomplished resolves etc., and endowed with all glory. On the other hand there are those who meditate on the '*Imperishable*' (*Akṣara*) — namely, the Ātman in its immaculate state, which is the same as the '*Unmanifest*' (*Avyakta*) — which means that it cannot be perceived by the sense organs. Which of these two categories of devotees have superior knowledge of Yoga? Who would reach their respective goals sooner?" — Such is the meaning of the question.

śrī bhagavān uvāca

mayyāveśya mano ye māṃ nitya-yuktā upāsate |
śraddhayā parayopetās-te me yuktatamā matāḥ || 2 ||

The Blessed Lord said:
2. Those who, [desirous of being] forever united with Me and possessing consummate faith, worship Me, focusing their minds on Me — these are considered by Me the highest among the Yogins.

Commentary

"Those who thus worship Me, focusing their minds on Me as their ultimate goal, attain Me quickly and easily" — such is the meaning.

ye tvakṣaram-anirdeśyam-avyaktaṃ paryupāsate |
sarvatragam-acintyaṃ ca kūṭastham acalaṃ dhruvam || 3 ||

3. But those who meditate upon the Imperishable (Ātman) the indefinable, the unmanifest, omnipresent, inconceivable, ubiquitous, stable and constant;

saṃniyam endriya-grāmaṃ sarvatra sama-buddhayaḥ |
te prāpnuvanti mām-eva sarva-bhūta-hite-ratāḥ || 4 ||

4. Having subdued all their senses, unprejudiced, intent on the welfare of all beings — they too come to Me alone.

kleśo'dhikataras-teṣāṃ avyaktā-sakta-cetasām |
avyaktā hi gatir-duḥkhaṃ dehavadbhir-avyāpyate || 5 ||

5. But greater is the vexation of those whose minds are thus attached to the unmanifest. For the way of the unmanifest is onerous for embodied beings to follow.

Commentary

The Ātman which is the objective of meditation of those who follow the path of the 'Akṣara' (the Imperishable) is thus described:— It is '*indefinable'* — it cannot be defined in terms of names for existing beings like gods and humans etc., because it is different from these categories. It is '*unmanifest'* — because it cannot be grasped by the sense organs. It is '*omnipresent and inconceivable'* — for though it exists everywhere in all bodies such as those of gods and others, it cannot be conceived of in terms of those bodies because it is an entity of an altogether different kind; It is '*ubiquitous'* — exists alike in all beings but is different from their respective physical forms. It is '*stable'* — it does not change its unique nature — it is therefore eternal because of not being subject to modifications.

Such aspirants are further described as those who, '*subduing their senses'* — like withdrawing the eye and the other organs from pursuing their natural objects. '*Unprejudiced'* — they look upon all beings of different forms as '*coequal'* because all of them consist of a Self [jivātman] comprised of consciousness. Therefore they are '*intent on the welfare of all beings'* — not given to taking pleasure in the misfortune of others, — such feelings of joy on the misfortune of others arise from one's identification with one's own special physical form.

"Those who meditate on the Imperishable Principle (individual Self) in this way, even they come to Me — this means that they realise that the Jīva is not subject to birth and death and is of a similar nature to Myself." Sri Krishna will refer to 'those who have attained similar qualities to me' (14.2). The Veda also declares: —

[the enlightened one] 'untainted, attains the highest degree of equality' (Mun.Up., 3.1.3).

Accordingly Krishna will declare [in 15.16-17] that the Supreme Brahman is different from the liberated Jīva devoid of modification and here denoted by the terms 'Imperishable' (Akṣara), and 'unchanging' (Kutastha) — 'The Highest Person is other than this Imperishable'

In the teaching of the Imperishable Doctrine (Akṣara-vidya of Mundaka Upanishad 1:1) what is designated by the term Akṣara is the Supreme Brahman Himself; for He is the source of all created beings.

'Now that higher science by which that Akṣara is known' (Mun. Up., 1.5)

Greater is the vexation of those whose minds are attached to the unmanifest — 'the path of the unmanifest' consists of directing the thought process at the unmanifest as its objective. It is accomplished only with difficulty by embodied beings, who are under the delusion that the body is the Self. For, embodied beings [generally] identify the Self with the physical body .

Sri Krishna now teaches very clearly how devotees are the wisest of seekers:—

ye tu sarvāṇi karmāṇi mayi saṃnyasya mat-parāḥ |
ananyenaiva yogena māṃ dhyāyanta upāsate || *6* ||

6. For, those who dedicate all their actions to Me, holding Me as their supreme goal, intent on Me and who worship Me and meditate on Me with exclusive devotion;

teṣāṃ ahaṃ samuddhartā mṛtyu-saṃsāra-sāgarāt |
bhavāmi na cirāt-pārtha mayyāveśita-cetasām || *7* ||

7. for those whose minds are thus focused on Me, O Partha, I soon become their saviour from the fatal ocean of death and rebirth.

Commentary

"But those whose minds are centred on Me, the Supreme Self, and 'intent upon Me,' — namely, regarding Me as their sole objective, dedicating to Me all their actions — including all worldly actions like eating which are meant for maintaining the body, as also Vedic rites like yāgas, charity, daily fire-offerings, austerities etc., along with their foundational rites and purposes — worship Me and meditate on Me with exclusive devotion, namely, with devotion devoid of any personal motive, adoring Me by all such acts as meditation, worship, prostration, praises and chanting the holy names which are in themselves cherished activities and are equal (in enjoyment) to the end itself — to these I swiftly become their liberator from the ocean of Samsara which, on account of its being obstructive to the attainment of Myself, is fatal."

mayyeva mana ādhatsva mayi buddhiṃ niveśaya |
nivasiṣyasi mayyeva ata ūrdhvaṃ na saṃśayaḥ || *8* ||

8. Centre your mind on Me alone; and let your intellect (Buddhi) be absorbed in Me. Then, you will abide in Me alone hereafter; there is no doubt.

atha cittaṃ samādhātuṃ na śaknoṣi mayi sthiram |
abhyāsa-yogena tato mām-icchāptuṃ dhanañjaya || *9* ||

9. If now, you are unable to centre your mind on Me in deep meditation, then seek to reach Me, O Arjuna (Dhananjaya), by the Yoga of constant Practice.

Commentary

"Now, if you are unable to focus your mind immediately on Me in deep meditation, then try to reach Me by the '*Yoga of Constant Mindfulness*' (*Abhyāsa Yoga*) — that is,

by practicing constant mindfulness, full of intense love, of the ocean of My manifold personal attributes of unlimited excellence such as beauty, affability, friendliness, affection, compassion, sweetness, majesty, magnanimity, fortitude, valour, omnipotence, omniscience, freedom from wants, accomplished of resolves, supreme sovereignty, the ultimate Cause of all, and of being the antithesis of all that is negative."

abhyāse'pyasamartho'si mat-karma paramo bhava |
mad-artham api karmāṇi kurvan siddhim avāpsyasi || *10* ||

10. If you are incapable of even this practice of mindfulness, then devote yourself to serving Me. For even by dedicating your actions to Me, you will attain perfection.

Commentary

"If you are incapable of practising mindfulness in the above manner, then devote yourself to such religious service such as the construction of temples, laying out temple gardens, lighting lamps therein, sweeping, sprinkling water and plastering the floor, gathering flowers, making offerings to Me, chanting My names, circumambulating temples, praising Me, prostrating to Me etc. Do these activities with fondest love. Even performing delightful works such as these, you will very soon become steadily focused on Me as through the practice of mindfulness, and will gain perfection through attaining Me."

athaitad apyaśakto'si kartuṃ mad-yogam āśritaḥ |
sarva karma phala tyāgaṃ tataḥ kuru yatātmavān || *11* ||

11. If you are unable to do even this, then, having resorted to My Yoga with a subdued mind, renounce the fruits of every action.

Commentary

"If you are unable to do even this, then *'having resorted to My Yoga*,' — that is, if you are unable even to do service to Me which is a component of Bhakti Yoga, whereby, I am regarded as the exclusive and sole objective of love through meditation — then you should resort to the Akṣara Yoga described in the first six chapters. This consists of contemplation on the nature of the Jīvatma. This [eventually] engenders devotion to Me and as a start to this practice (of Akṣara Yoga), practice disinterested action." 'With a controlled mind' — means having subdued the thought processes.

The intellectual conviction that Krishna is the only worthy objective of attainment and love arises only when all the Karmic reactions of an aspirant are completely destroyed. By the performance of works without attachment to their results and doing them only as service to the Lord, Self-realisation arises. From this realisation one ceases to identify the Self with the physical body, and with the removal of the veil of nescience one realises that one is a śeṣa (subsidiary/dependant) in relation to the Lord. It is then that consummate devotion to the Lord spontaneously arises.

śreyo hi jñānam abhyāsāt jñānād-dhyānaṃ viśiṣyate |
dhyānāt karma phala tyāgas tyāgāt-chāntir anantaram || *12* ||

12. Wisdom is far better than the practice [of mindfulness of the Lord]. Meditation is esteemed to be better than wisdom; and the renunciation of fruits of action is better than meditation — from such renunciation, peace ensues.

Commentary

In the absence of a spontaneous intense love for the Lord, the practice of mindfulness of the Lord is difficult, so therefore the next best means to well-being is the attainment of wisdom — which is direct Self-realisation by contemplating on the imperishable

nature of the Ātman (Akṣara). Better than imperfect Self-realisation, is perfect meditation on the Self, as it is more conducive to one's well-being. More conducive to well-being than imperfect meditation, is the work performed with renunciation of the rewards.

The peace of mind that follows the absolution of sins, is attained only through the performance of works without a desire for their fruits. When the mind is at peace, perfect meditation on the Ātman is possible. From meditation one obtains the direct realisation of the Ātman. From this direct Self-realisation arises consummate devotion. It is in this format alone that Atma-nistha or 'establishment in the Ātman' becomes useful for a person who is incapable of practising Bhakti Yoga. And for one practising the discipline for Self-realisation (Jñana Yoga) without perfect tranquillity of mind, unmotivated work (Karma Yoga), which includes contemplation on the nature of the Self, is the better path to Self-realisation — this is the purport.

Now Sri Krishna enumerates the attributes required of one intending to perform unmotivated work: —

adveṣṭā sarva bhūtānāṃ maitraḥ karuṇa eva ca ||
nir-mamo nir-ahaṅkāraḥ sama duḥkha sukha kṣamī || *13* ||

13. Not prejudiced towards any living being, friendly and compassionate to all, free from the notions of 'I' and 'mine', and regarding all pain and pleasure with equanimity, and forbearing;

santuṣṭaḥ satataṃ yogī yatātmā dṛḍha-niścayaḥ ||
mayyarpita mano buddhiḥ yo mad-bhaktaḥ sa me priyaḥ || *14* ||

14. contented, constantly contemplating, self-restrained and firm in one's convictions, dedicating the mind and intellect to Me — such a devotee is dear to Me.

Commentary

"That devotee is most dear to Me who never hates any being even though they hate him and do him wrong. For he has the attitude that the Lord impels these beings to hate him and to do him wrong in order to punish him for his transgressions. He demonstrates a friendly disposition towards all beings in spite of being hated and aggrieved. He evinces compassion — shows mercy to suffering beings. He is free from the feeling of 'I-ness', — that is, free from the delusion that the body is the Self. Therefore, pain and pleasure are the same to him. He is free from depression and exultation resulting from pain and pleasure arising from his deeds. He is 'forbearing' — that is, remains unaffected even by pleasure and pain which arise from the inevitable contact with sense-objects. He is '*contented'* — satisfied with whatever chance may bring him for the sustenance of his body. He is '*constantly contemplating*' — constantly practicing mindfulness of the Self as being different from material nature. He is *'self-restrained'* — namely, engaged in controlling the thought processes. He is of '*firm conviction'* — regarding the doctrines taught in this Science of the Self. His 'mind and intellect are dedicated to Me' — in the certitude that Bhagavan Vasudeva alone is propitiated by unmotivated works, and when duly reverenced, He will reveal to me the direct vision of the Ātman. Such a devotee of mine, who acts in this manner as a Karma Yogin, is dear to Me."

yasmān no dvijate loko lokān nodvijate ca yaḥ ||
harṣāmarṣabhayo-dvegaiḥ mukto yaḥ sa ca me priyaḥ || *15* ||

15. He by whom the world is not disturbed, and who is not disturbed by the world, who is free from joy and jealousy, fear and repulsion — he is dear to me.

Commentary

The Karma Yogi does nothing to cause affliction to any being in the world. He has no cause to fear the world — no action on the part of others can cause him disturbance because of complete freedom from antagonism towards the world. Therefore he does not show favour towards some and intolerance towards others; he does not fear some or is repulsed by others.

anapekṣaḥ śucir dakṣaḥ udāsīno gatavyathaḥ |
sarvārambha parityāgī yo mad bhaktaḥ sa me priyaḥ || *16* ||

16. One who is free from expectations, who is uncontaminated, skilled, impartial and free from anxiety, who has renounced every undertaking— is dear to Me.

Commentary

'*Free from expectations'* — means no longer desires anything except Self-realisation; '*uncontaminated'* — refers to one whose body is nourished only on the food prescribed by the Scriptures; one who is '*skilled'* — is an expert in performing works that are enjoined by the Scriptures; one who is '*impartial'* — is not interested in deeds other than those enjoined by the Scriptures. One who is free from '*anxiety'* — is free from disturbances caused by heat, cold, contact with coarse things and other such experiences which are inevitably associated with the performance of prescribed activities; one who '*renounces all undertakings'* — renounces those of a selfish nature but not those demanded by the Scriptures.

yo na hṛṣyati na dveṣṭi na śocati na kāṅkṣati |
śubhāśubha parityāgī bhaktimān yaḥ sa me priyaḥ || *17* ||

17. One who is full of devotion to Me, who rejoices not, nor hates, nor grieves, nor desires, and who renounces both merit and demerit — such a devotee is dear to me.

Commentary

The Karma Yogi does not '*rejoice'* — on obtaining things which are generally considered to be the causes of joy. He does not '*hate'* — on obtaining anything undesirable; he does not '*grieve'* — that is, is not affected by common deprivations which generally cause grief such as the loss of spouse, child, fortune etc.; who '*does not desire'* these things if he does not already have them. He 'renounces both merit and demerit' — because, like demerit, merit also causes bondage there being no difference between them in this respect.

samaḥ śatrau ca mitre ca tathā mānāpamānayoḥ |
śītoṣṇa sukha duḥkheṣu samaḥ saṅga vivarjitaḥ || *18* ||

18. He who is impartial to both foe and friend, honour and dishonour, who is indifferent to both cold and heat, pleasure and pain and who is free from all attachments;

tulya nindā stutir maunī santuṣṭo yena kenacit |
aniketaḥ sthira-matiḥ bhaktimān me priyo naraḥ || *19* ||

19. to whom both censure and praise are equal, who is silent [when praised or abused] and content with any condition, who has no home, who is steady of mind, and who is devoted to Me — dear to Me is such a person.

Commentary

The general (abstract) absence of hate etc., towards foes and friends has already been taught in the verse beginning with, '*He who never hates any being'* (11.13). What is

now stressed is that specific equanimity which is to be practiced when such friends and enemies are actually present before one. One who has no '*home'*, refers to freedom from attachment to home and possessions. He possesses steadiness of mind with regard to the Ātman — because of this he is also balanced even in honour and dishonour.

Emphasising the superiority of *Bhakti-Niṣṭha* (devotion) over *Ātma-Niṣṭha* (gnosis), Sri Krishna now concludes in accordance with what is stated at the beginning of this chapter.

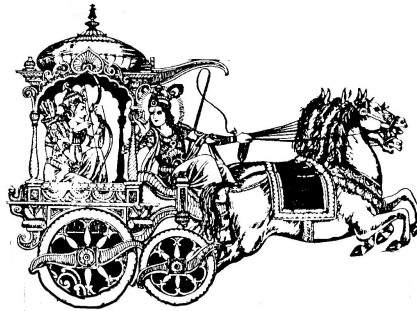
ye tu dharmyāmṛtam idaṃ yathoktaṃ paryupāsate |
śraddha-dhānāḥ mat-paramā bhaktāste'tīva me priyāḥ || 20 ||

20. But those devotees who adopt this ambrosial virtuous conduct (dharma) as taught above, who are full of faith and who regard Me as the Supreme — they are exceedingly dear to Me.

Commentary

"But those who practice Bhakti Yoga— which is an ambrosial path of virtuous conduct, that is, which is both good and delectable at the same time, and which, even as a means, is equal to its end in being most profitable — and adopt it as instructed in the stanza beginning with 'Those who centre their minds on Me' (12.2) — such devotees are exceedingly dear to Me."

hariḥ oṃ tatsat
iti śrīmad bhagavad gītāsūpaniṣatsu
brahma-vidyāṃ yoga-śāstre
śrī-kṛṣṇārjuna saṃvāde bhakti yogo nāma
dvādaśo'dhyāyaḥ

Thus in the Upanishads of the Glorious Bhagavad Gita
The science of the Eternal, the Scripture of Yoga
The dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna
Ends the twelfth discourse entitled
"Communion through Devotion"

Chapter 13

Prakṛti-Puruṣa-viveka Yogaḥ

Differentiation between Spirit & Matter

Summary of the Teaching

The teaching in the first set of six chapters, dealt with the essential nature of the jivātman, which is a preliminary to the meditation on Krishna, the Supreme Brahman, the ultimate object of attainment. The two disciplines of Knowledge/meditation (Jñāna Yoga) and Non-desiderative Work (Karma Yoga) as means of spiritual advancement have also been taught.

Following that, in the middle set of six chapters, the practice of intense and one-pointed Bhakti Yoga, preceded by the teaching on the supreme goal — the Glorious Supreme Being, were expounded upon. Incidentally it was pointed out, that Bhakti Yoga is also the means of attainment for those who desire power & wealth (*aiśvarya*) and also for those who aspire after the state of self-isolated liberation (*kaivalya*),

In this present set of 6 chapters, the topics mentioned in the first two groups are examined in greater detail. These are; the essential nature of Prakrti (Material Nature) and of the Jivātman, and of the universe comprised of the combination of these two; the essential nature of the Supreme Lord and the basic features of the paths of Karma (Action), Jñana (Knowledge) and Bhakti (Devotion) and the ways of practicing these disciplines.

Now, in this, the thirteenth chapter the following topics are discussed: —

(1) the nature of the body and the Self;
(2) an investigation of the physical body as it really is;
(3) the means of attaining liberation from embodiment;
(4) the investigation of the Jīva in a state of separation from a body;
(5) the investigation of the causes of physical embodiment by the Jīva and
(6) the method of discriminating between Matter and Spirit.

(Some editions of the Gita begin this chapter with a question by Arjuna:—)

śrī arjuna uvāca

prakṛtiṃ puruṣaṃ caiva kṣetraṃ kṣetrajñam eva ca |
etad veditum icchāmi jñānaṃ jñeyaṃ ca keśava || *1* ||

Arjuna Asked
O Kesava, I desire to learn about the spirit and about matter, about the Field and its Knower, about knowledge and the knower.

Śrī Bhagavān uvāca

idaṃ śarīraṃ kaunteya kṣetram ityabhidhīyate |
etad yo vetti taṃ prāhuḥ kṣetrajñā iti tad vidaḥ || 2 ||

The Lord said:
2. This body, O Arjuna, is called the Field (Kṣetra). One who knows it is called the 'Knower of the Field' (Kṣetrajña), by the enlightened ones.

Commentary

In reference to the body one says; ‘I am a god’, ‘I am a human’, ‘I am fat’, ‘I am thin’ etc. according to the principle of co-ordinate predication (*samānādhikaraṇya*) the ‘I’ referred to is the experiencing Self (*jivātman*), and that which is experienced [as fat, thin etc] refers to something other than the Self i.e. the body. The enlightened ones understand that the body is only the Field where the fruits of past deeds are reaped by the Self, which is different from the body.

It is obvious that when one sees an object like a pot which is different from one's body, one thinks — 'I, a god, see this pot' or 'I, a human see it' etc., in this case one is identifying with one’s body by the principle of samānādhikaraṇya. In the same way one also experiences the body as an object of knowledge when one says:— ‘I know this body.’ Thus, if the body is a knowable object, it must be different from the knowing subject. Therefore, the Self as Field-knower (*Kṣetrajña*), is different from the body which is an object of knowledge like a pot and other things.

But in practical terms one's body is inseparable from oneself; for it constitutes a fundamental attribute of the Self like the 'cow-ness' of the cow. The knowing Self is however unique in being an eternal and subtle form of consciousness and can only perceive itself through a mind refined by Yoga and not by mundane awareness. The ignorant regard the Self as being a physical phenomena because of its intimate involvement with material nature. Sri Krishna thus declares later on:— ‘When, being associated with the Guṇas, the Self departs or stays or experiences the deluded perceive it not, only those who are enlightened see’. (15.10).

For a more detailed polemic please see appendix.

kṣetrajñaṃ cāpi māṃ viddhi sarva kṣetreṣu bhārata |
kṣetra kṣetrajñayor-jñānaṃ yat tajjñānam mataṃ param || 3 ||

3. And know Me also as the Kṣetrajña in all Fields, O Arjuna. The knowledge of both the Field and its Knower is, in My view, the highest knowledge.

Commentary

As the Overself, Krishna is the ‘Field-Knower’ in all the bodies such as those of gods, humans, animals and antigods. By the expression 'also' (api) it can be inferred that the body itself is also a manifestation of Krishna. Just as the body cannot exist separately from the ātman on account of its being an attribute [eg. like the mango and its taste] and consequently when referring to the body one actually refers to the ātman according to the principle of co-ordinate predication, in the same manner, both the body (Field) and the Self (Field-Knower), on account of both of their being inseparable attributes of Krishna’s can thus be denoted as ‘one with Krishna’.

The Veda teaches that the Supreme Being is the Overself both the Kṣetra (Field) and the Kṣetrajña (Jīva), because of their being like His ‘body’ [corporeality]. For example see the passages from the Brhad-aranyaka Upanishad beginning with 3.7.3).

The Advaitin claims that this passage teaches absolute identity between the Jīva and Iśvara. Rāmānuja’s position is that the relationship is not one of absolute ontological identity but only one of identity of reference of several inseparable entities to a common substratum — known technically as Samānādhikaraṇya or co-ordinate predication. The literal meaning of the expression is 'the relation of abiding in a common substratum'. The relation of the Jīva and Prakrti to Iśvara is as of body and self or as a mode (Prakara) and its substratum. The relation between the body and Self of an ordinary being is, only separable at death. But it is inseparable in the case of Iśvara and this Jīva-cum-Prakrti ‘body’. In this sense Iśvara is the Field-knower (Kṣetrajña) of the Field (Kṣetra) constituted of all individual entities sentient and insentient, just as in each individual

personality the Jīva and the body are the field-knower and the field respectively.

Being in co-ordinate predication (Samānādhikaraṇya), Brahman is an inseparable but mutually distinct complex of the Prakrti, Jīva and Iśvara. the cosmic mode of body constituted of Prakrti and Puruṣa is at intervals in alternate states of latency and patency (Pralaya and Sṛṣṭi or dissolution and manifestation). As the Essence-self of a complex whole, He can be denoted by any of the terms entering into it—Iśvara, Prakrti or Jīva. Brahman is sometimes mentioned in the Vedas as Asat (non-existent) when everything is in latency in Pralaya, and as Sat (existent) when all entities are in manifestations (Sṛṣṭi). All these expressions denote Him only. He is described in some texts as attributeless. It means only that He is without any undesirable negative qualities. He is on the other hand endowed with countless auspicious attributes.

tat kṣetraṃ yacca yādṛk ca yad vikāri yataśca yat |
sa ca yo yat prabhāvaśca tat samāsena me śṛṇu || 4 ||

4. Learn briefly from Me what the Field is, and what it is like, what its modifications are, what purpose it serves, what it's [nature] is; and what the Self is and what its potencies are.

ṛṣibhir bahudhā gītaṃ chandobhir vividhaiḥ pṛthak |
brahma-sūtrapadaiścaiva hetumadbhir viniścitaiḥ || 5 ||

5. It has been lauded by the sages in various ways, in various distinctive hymns of the Vedas, and also in the sound logic and conclusive arguments of the Brahma-sutras.

Commentary

It is this truth regarding the Kṣetra and Kṣetrajña that has been sung in various ways by Parasara and other sages. For example:—

'I and you and others O King, are composed of the elements; and the elements following the stream of the Gunas, assume a physical shape, But the Gunas such as Sattva and the rest, O ruler of the earth, are dependent on Karma; and Karma, accumulated by nescience [which mistakes the non-self for the Self], influences the condition of all beings without exception. The Self is [essentially] pure, imperishable, tranquil, transcends the Gunas and is pre-eminent over Prakrti' (V.P 2.13.69-71)

The body, characterised by head, hands, feet and the like is different from Puruṣa.' Which of these O King should I designate by the name "I"?. (Ibid., 2.13.89)

'Are you the head or chest, or else the belly? Are you indeed the feet and other limbs or do they belong to you, O King? You are distinct in your nature from all your bodily parts, O King, become intelligent and consider — "Who am I" '. (Ibid., 1, 3.102-3)

In various distinctive hymns of the Vedas, Rig Yajus, Saman and Atharvan the distinction of body and the Self has been sung. (Tait. Up., 2.1.2 & 2.4.2 & 1.5.2).

The Supreme Self (Paramātma) consisting of bliss absolute, is declared to be the Overself of the individual Self (Kṣetrajña). Similarly all the three Vedas; (Rig, Saman and Yajur) in their various methods of teaching, affirm the separate and distinctive existence of the Kṣetra and the Kṣetrajña with Brahman as their Overself.

Likewise, the same doctrine is taught in the Brahma-Sutra; the aphorisms concerning Brahman, known also as the Shariraka-Sutras, ("the aphorism concerning the embodied one") which are comprised of cogent, reasoned, logical and irrefutable conclusions. In the Sutras commencing with, 'Space is not created because there are no Vedic declarations to that effect' (B.S., 2.3.1), the nature and the attributes of the Kṣetra are determined. In the Sutras commencing with — 'The individual Self has no beginning because there are no Scriptural statements to that effect and because of its eternality, [determined] from them (the Vedas)' (Ibid., 2.3.18), the true nature of the Kṣetrajña is

established. In the Sūtras — 'But from the Supreme, this Being declared by the Vedas' (Ibid., 2.3.40), it is explained that the Lord is the Overself of the individual Self because He controls it.

mahā-bhūtāny-ahaṅkāro buddhir-avyaktam eva ca ।
indriyāṇi daśaikaṃ ca pañca cendriya gocarāḥ ॥ 6 ॥

6. The principle elements, the Ahaṅkāra, the Buddhi, the Avyakta, the ten senses and the one besides, and the five objects of the senses;

icchā dveṣaḥ sukhaṃ duḥkhaṃ saṅghātaścetanā dhṛtiḥ ।
etat kṣetraṃ samāsena savikāram udāhṛtam ॥ 7 ॥

7. … attraction, aversion, pleasure and pain — thus the component elements of the Field, which is the basis of consciousness have been recounted along with its modifications.

Commentary

The principle elements, the *Ahaṅkāra*, the *Buddhi* and the *Avyakta* are factors that produce the body or Field. The 'principle elements' are the earth, water, fire, air and ether. The *'Ahaṅkāra'* (ego-sense) here refers to the *Bhūtadi* (primeval elements). The *'Buddhi'* is what is called *Mahat* or cosmic intelligence; the *'Avyakta'* is also known as the *Prakrti* or Material Nature. The 'ten senses and the one' and the 'five objects of senses' are principles rooted in the *Kṣetra*. The five sensory organs are ears, skin, eyes, taste buds and nose. The five motor organs are tongue (speech), hands, feet, and the organs of excretion and reproduction — these are known as the ten senses. The *Manas* or organ of internal perception — the mind, is the additional 'one'. The 'objects of the senses' are five — sound, feel, form, taste and smell.

Attraction, aversion, pleasure and pain, being the effects of the Field, are said to be its modifications. Though attraction, aversion, pleasure and pain are said to be the characteristics of the Self, yet they arise from the association of the Self with the body or Field. Krishna will later in verse 20 affirm that they are the characteristics of the Self.

The combination of elements serves as the support (Adhrti) of the Self. As such, the word Adhrti means substratum. The combination of material elements produces the substratum (mind-body) as a device for the Self to experience pleasure and pain, and to acquire worldly experiences as well as final liberation. The combination of elements is formed by the substances commencing with the Prakrti and ending with the earth. These form a Sanghata or an aggregate of elements and this is called the Field.

Now certain virtues, the produce of the Kṣetra, which are worthy of being cultivated as they are the means for securing the knowledge of the Self, are enumerated.

amānitvam adambhitvam ahiṃsā kṣāntir ārjavam ।
ācāryopāsanaṃ śaucaṃ sthairyam ātma-vinigrahaḥ ॥ 8 ॥

8. Humility, absence of ostentation, non-injury, forbearance, integrity, service of the preceptor, purity, resoluteness and self-restraint;

Commentary

'Humility' (amānitvam) — means showing respect towards eminent people. *'Absence of ostentation' (adambhitvam)* — *'dambha'* is the practice of Dharma in order to be acclaimed as a virtuous person; freedom from this is un-ostentatiousness, *non-injury (ahimsa)* — absence of the proclivity to injure others by means of speech, mind and body. *Forbearance' (Kṣānti)* — is the state of remaining free of resentment towards those who cause one harm. *Integrity (ārjava)* — complete harmony of one's thought, speech and action in one's dealing with all other beings. *'Service to the preceptor'* —

being intent on prostrating, questioning, performing service etc., to the teacher who imparts the knowledge of the Self. *'Purity'* — is the maintenance of the ideal state of thought, speech and action, as enjoined by the Shastras, for the reception of the knowledge of the Self and its realisation. *'Resoluteness'* — is possessing unshakeable conviction in the teachings of the Shastras concerning the Self. *'Self-restraint'* — mean withdrawing the attention from all objects that are different in nature from the Self.

indriyārtheṣu vairāgyam anahaṅkāra eva ca |
janma-mṛtyu-jarā-vyādhi duḥkha doṣānudarśanam || 9 ||

9. Dispassion for sense-gratification and also absence of self-affirmative ideation, perception of balefulness in birth, death, old age, disease and sorrow;

Commentary

'Dispassion for sense-gratification' — means development of a distaste for all objects different from the Self by the constant practice of mindfulness of the imperfection in them. *'Absence of self-affirmative ideation' (anahaṅkāra)* — means freedom from the misconception that the body is the Self. This is only an example for other misconceptions too — it also indicates freedom from the feeling of possession towards one's own things and those of others. *'Perception of balefulness in birth, death, old age, disease and sorrow'* — means constant reflection upon the unfavourableness of the inevitable conditions of birth, death, old age, disease and suffering associated with the body.

asaktir anabhiṣvaṅgaḥ putra-dāra-gṛhādiṣu |
nityaṃ ca sama-cittatvam iṣṭān-iṣṭopapattiṣu || 10 ||

10. Non-attachment, absence of clinging to progeny, spouse, home and the like, and constant equanimity of mind in all desirable and undesirable events;

Commentary

'Non-attachment' — means freedom from attachment to things other than the Self. 'Absence of clinging to progeny, spouse, home etc.' — means absence of excessive affection for these, beyond their due as being helpful towards the fulfilment of duties mention by the Shastras. 'Constant even-mindedness' — means the state of freedom from joy and grief with regard to occurrences arising from one's efforts to achieve one's goals.

mayi cānanya-yogena bhaktir-avyabhicāriṇī |
vivikta deśa-sevitvam aratir jana-saṃsadi || 11 ||

11. Consistent devotion directed to Me alone, unadulterated, resorting to solitary places and dislike for crowds:

Commentary

'Consistent devotion' — means devotion towards one single object, namely, Krishna the Lord of all; *'resorting to solitary places and dislike for crowds'* — means having no attraction for mundane social activities.

adhyātmajñāna nityatvaṃ tattva-jñānārtha darśanam |
etajjñānam iti proktam ajñānaṃ yadato'nyathā || 12 ||

12. Constant reflection on the knowledge of the Self, contemplation directed at the attainment of realisation of the Truth — all this is declared to be wisdom-practice (*jñānam*), and what is contrary to it is ignorance (*ajñānam*).

Commentary

'Adhyātma-jñāna' — is the knowledge that pertains to the Self. 'Contemplation directed at the attainment of realisation of the Truth — namely, being always absorbed in the thought process directed at the realisation of the Truth. *'Wisdom-practice'* — is that by which the Self is realised i.e., the means for attaining Self-realisation.

The cultivation of the group of above mentioned virtues, beginning with humility etc., are those that are favourable for developing realisation of the Self in the embodied state. Ignorance comprises of all those attributes of the Field, which are different from the ones mentioned above, because they are an hindrance to Self-realisation.

jñeyaṃ yattat pravakṣyāmi yajjñātvāmṛtam aśnute |
anādi mat-paraṃ brahma na sattannāsad ucyate || 13 ||

13. I shall declare that which has to be known, knowing which, one attains immortality — It is beginningless Brahman, to which I am superior; it is said to be neither being nor non-being.

Commentary

"I shall now teach about the nature of the individual Self (Brahman) which is the object to be known, namely, that which is to be gained through the cultivation of the virtues like humility etc., — that, by knowing which, one attains one's original state which is immortal, birthless, free from old age, death and such other material conditions."

Anādi — means that which has no beginning. Indeed, there is no origination for this individual Self (Brahman) and therefore no end either. The Veda also declares:

'The intelligent Self is not born, nor dies' (Kat. Up, 2.18).

Matpara — means having Me as Superior. Verily, it has been said earlier:— 'Know that My Superior Nature is different. It is the life-principle [Jīva-bhuta], by which this universe is sustained.' (7.5). By virtue of being pervaded by the Lord, the individual Self naturally finds joy in being completely dependant upon Him. (See Br.Up. Madh., 5.7.22, Sve. Up., 6.9 & 16)

The term '*Brahman'* means that which has the capacity for infinite expansion. It is different from the body and not conditioned by it, in other words it is the [subjective] principle which perceives the [objective] Kṣetra. (See Sve. Up., 5.9.) The embodied state is brought about by Karma, and the ātman can again assume its infinite nature only when it is freed from the bonds of Karma. The term Brahman is also used as a synonym to designate the individual Self in Gita 14.26 & 27 Gita 18.54.

Brahman is said to be neither existent nor non-existent. The terms 'existent' and 'non-existent' cannot express the essential nature of the ātman because the ātman [in its essential nature] is free from both the states of effect and cause. However, it is said to be existent when it is embodied in the forms of gods, humans and animals etc. In the latent stage it cannot possess names and forms and is therefore said to be 'non-existent'. (See Tait. Up., 2.7.1 & Br.Up., 1.4.7).

The appearance of the ātman in the states of cause and effect occurs due to the obscuring of consciousness by Avidya or ignorance in the form of Karma. It is not an expression of its real nature. So then, the terms 'being' and 'non-being' do not describe the true nature of the ātman.

If it is argued [by the Advaitins] that the passage — 'In the beginning, verily, this (Brahman) was non-existence' (Tait. Up., 2.7.1), is describing the Supreme Brahman in the state of cause — even then, it can be pointed out that the Supreme Brahman in its causal condition is still accompanied by the sentient and insentient entities in a subtle [latent] state as its corporeal manifestation — but undifferentiated by names and forms! In this way the description is still valid. According to the same principle therefore, the

nature of Kṣetra (body) and Kṣetrajña (individual Self) in the state of cause can also be expressed by the term 'non-being'. But this condition of the individual Self has occurred due to Karma — in its original immaculate state the Self cannot be signified by the terms 'being' and 'non-being'.

sarvataḥ pāṇi-pādaṃ tat sarvato' kṣiśiro-mukham |
sarvataḥ śṛutimalloke sarvam-āvṛtya tiṣṭhati || 14 ||

14. Everywhere are Its (Brahman's) hands and feet; Its eyes, heads and faces are everywhere; Its ears are on all sides; and It exists enveloping all things.

Commentary

Everywhere are Its hands and feet — the ātman in its original immaculate state, is able to act and move everywhere, it perceives everything, knows everything and enjoys everything.

Sve. Up. 3 19 states that the Supreme Brahman although devoid of physical hands and feet etc. is said to move everywhere and act everywhere. It is affirmed by Mun. Up., 3:1:13 that the individual Self (*pratyagātman*) too, in its original immaculate state also has the power of omnipresence, and omniscience etc, because it obtains equality with Brahman.

It exists enveloping all things: — the purport is that in its essential immaculate state the individual ātman is free from the limitation of space and time and thus reaches everywhere.

sarvendriya guṇābhāsaṃ sarvendriya vivarjitam |
asaktaṃ sarva bhṛccaiva nirguṇaṃ guṇabhoktṛ ca || 15 ||

15. Illuminating the functions of the senses while unconnected with the sense organs, detached and yet supporting all, free from the Gunas and yet experiencing the Gunas;

Commentary

'Illuminating the functions of the senses' — means that the ātman is capable of experiencing the material world through the operating of the senses. 'While unconnected with the sense organs' — means the ātman [in its original state] is capable of knowing everything by itself, without the sense organs. It is *'detached'* — namely, it is completely free in its essential nature, from attachment to the bodies of gods etc. [with which it becomes associated]. *'Yet supporting all'* — yet it is capable of supporting all bodies, such as those of gods etc *'It is free from the Gunas'* — that is, in its essential nature it is free from the three modes of material nature — *Sattva* (Harmony), *Rajas* (Activity) and *Tamas* (Inertia) and yet it is the *'experiencer of the Gunas'* — It has the potential capacity to experience the three modes of material nature.

bahir-antaśca bhūtānām acaraṃ caram eva ca |
sūkṣmatvāt tad avijñeyaṃ dūrasthaṃ cāntike ca tat || 16 ||

16. It is within and without all beings; It is unmoving and yet moving; It is so subtle that none can comprehend It; It is far away, and yet so very near.

Commentary

'It is unmoving and yet moving' — the ātman is by nature, unmoving, but when it has a body, it is said to be moving. It is so subtle that none can comprehend It: — although embodied, this ātman, possessed of omnipotence and omniscient is yet distinct from the body, and cannot be comprehended by those trapped in Samsara. *'It is far away and yet*

so very near': — though present in one's very own body, it is not perceived by those who are devoid of humility and other virtues [mentioned previously] as also from those who possess negative qualities. To those who possess humility etc., the same ātman is very near.

avibhaktaṃ ca bhūteṣu vibhaktam iva ca sthitam |
bhūtabhartṛ ca tajjñeyaṃ grasiṣṇu prabhaviṣṇu ca || 17 ||

17. Undivided and yet existing as if divided among beings, this ātman is to be known as the supporter of elements, It consumes and regenerates.

Commentary

Though the ātman is present everywhere in the bodies of gods, humans and animals, It is said to be 'undivided' because, the nature of self-consciousness is the same in all. However, to those who are ignorant, it appears as different in the various bodies.

The ātman can also be differentiated on other grounds such as the 'supporter of elements' etc. Because it supports the physical body which is a combination of earth and other elements. Likewise, it is that which 'consumes' nutrients etc. Because the ātman 'consumes' the food, it can be regarded as different from the elements [of food]. It causes 'regeneration' — the metabolism of the consumed food. Because eating, reproducing and such activities are not seen in a corpse, it is concluded that the inert body, an aggregate of elements, cannot be the cause of consuming food, reproducing and supporting them — the ātman is the cause.

jyotiṣām api tajjyotis tamasaḥ param-ucyate |
jñānaṃ jñeyaṃ jñāna-gamyaṃ hṛdi sarvasya viṣṭhitam || 18 ||

18. The Light of all lights is this [Self], said to be beyond Tamas (darkness). It is consciousness, It is the knowable, It is to be attained by wisdom, It is present in the hearts of all.

Commentary

'It is consciousness' alone in the form of the radiance of the ātman which reveals all sources of light such as the sun, lamp etc. But a lamp and other such sources of light, merely dispel the darkness that intervenes between the eye and its object. This ātman is said to be beyond *Tamas* (darkness). — The term *Tamas* here denotes Material Nature (*Prakrti*) in its subtle state. The meaning is that the Self transcends Prakrti, and is the perceiver or knower of Prakrti.

iti kṣetraṃ tathā jñānaṃ jñeyaṃ coktaṃ samāsataḥ |
mad bhakta etad vijñāya mad bhāvāyopapadyate || 19 ||

19. Thus the Field, knowledge and the object of knowledge have been briefly stated. On realising this, My devotee becomes fit to attain My state of being.

Commentary

'*My state of being'* — that is, a state that is inherent in Me and is not part of the cycle of reincarnation.

prakṛtiṃ puruṣaṃ caiva viddhyānādī ubhāvapi |
vikārāṃśca guṇāṃścaiva viddhi prakṛti saṃbhavān || 20 ||

20. Know that both Matter (*Prakrti*) and Spirit (*Puruṣa*) are without beginning, and know that the modifications and the qualities arise from the Prakrti.

Commentary

Both Material Nature and the individual Self are in constant association with each other and are both beginingless. The modifications (*vikāras*) — attraction, aversion and clinging which are the cause of bondage and the qualities (*guṇas*) — such as humility etc, which lead to liberation, all arise from Material Nature. This Material Nature, active from time immemorial, evolves into physical forms and becomes conjoined with the ātman. Through its own modifications such as attraction, aversion and clinging, it becomes the cause of bondage for the ātman. This same Prakrti through the development of other modifications such humility etc., brings about Liberation — such is the purport.

kārya kāraṇa kartṛtve hetuḥ prakṛtir ucyate |
puruṣaḥ sukha-duḥkhānāṃ bhoktṛtve hetur ucyate || *21* ||

21. *Prakrti* (Material Nature) is said to be the causal agent of the body (*kārya*) and sense organs (*kāraṇa*). The Puruṣa (Self) is said to be the cause of the experience of pleasure and pain.

Commentary

The *'Kārya'* means the body, the *'Kāraṇas'* are the instruments, that is, the 5 senses of perception and the 5 organs of action plus the mind — in the course of their functioning, Prakrti, which is subservient to the ātman, is alone considered to be the operative factor. In other words, the physical functions, which are the means of experience, have their foundation in Material Nature, which has developed into the form of the physical body controlled by the Self.

The agency of the Self really means that it is responsible for the will (effort) to support the body and is thus considered responsible for the experience of pleasure and pain.

puruṣaḥ prakṛtistho hi bhuṅkte prakṛtijān guṇān |
kāraṇaṃ guṇa saṅgo'sya sadasad yoni janmasu || *22* ||

22. Indeed, the *Puruṣa* (Self) situated in *Prakrti* (Material Nature) experiences the effects (Gunas) that arise from Prakrti. Its attachment to these Gunas is the cause of birth in higher and lower species.

Commentary

The Self (in its pristine state) experiences itself by itself, as nothing but pure joy. But when embodied and in conjunction with Prakrti, It experiences the products which arise from Prakrti, namely; happiness, suffering etc, which are the effects of the Gunas — Sattva, Rajas and Tamas.

The Self, transmigrating through a series of bodies like those of gods, humans and animals, which are all modifications of Prakrti, becomes involved in the happiness and pain resulting from the experiences associated with these respective species. It then engages itself in skilful (*puṇya*) and unskilful (*pāpa*) deeds, which produce results in the form of happiness and suffering. Now in order to reap the fruits of these good and evil deeds, the Self is born again in pleasant and unpleasant circumstances. Then it again becomes active, and thus perpetuates the cycle of reincarnation. As long as the virtues like humility etc., which are the means for realising the Self, are not developed, its entanglement in Samsāra is perpetuated. Thus, it has been declared here, that attachment causes births in higher and lower species.

upadṛṣṭānumantā ca bhartā bhoktā maheśvaraḥ |
paramātmeti cāpyukto deho'smin puruṣaḥ paraḥ || *23* ||

23. The embodied Self is called the witness, the sanctioner, supporter, experiencer, the great lord and likewise the supreme person.

Commentary

This Self (*Puruṣa*) existing in the body becomes the one who observes and 'sanctions' — permits the physical activities in accordance with volition and other mind states. Likewise, It is the 'supporter' of the body. It becomes the 'experiencer' of the pleasure and pain resulting from its activities. Thus, by virtue of ruling and supporting the body and by making the body completely subservient to its own needs, the Self becomes 'the great lord' (*maheśvara*) of the body, the senses and the mind. (vide Gita 15.8).

The embodied jivātman is said to be the 'supreme person' in relation to the body, the senses and the mind. The particle 'likewise' (*api*) indicates that the Self is the 'supreme lord' in relation to the body in the same way as it is the supreme person. The supremacy of the Self has already been described in the text beginning with 'It is the beginingless Brahman to which I am superior' (Gita 13.12). It is true that the Self [in its emancipated state] has limitless power and knowledge. But it becomes 'the great lord' and the 'supreme person' only in relation to the physical body. The term 'Self' (*ātman*) hereafter will be applied to both the body and the mind, for example:— 'Some perceive the Self by means of the self through meditation' (13.24).

ya evaṃ vetti puruṣaṃ prakṛtiṃ ca guṇaiḥ saha |
sarvathā vartamāno'pi na sa bhūyo'bhijāyate || 24 ||

24. One who understands the Puruṣa (Self)) and the Prakrti (body) thus, along with the Gunas [to be described], is not born again, regardless of one's (material) situation.

Commentary

One who *'understands'*— namely, one who knows these two principles as they really are, by the process of discrimination: — is never re-associated with Material Nature again. *'Regardless of one's (material) condition'* — means in whatever distressful embodiment one may be in [at present].

dhyānenātmani paśyanti kecid ātmānam ātmanā |
anye sāṅkhyena yogena karma-yogena cāpare || 25 ||

25. Some perceive the Self within the self (body) by meditation by the self (mind), others by Saṅkhya Yoga, and still others by Karma Yoga.

Commentary

The three different type of Yogis are mentioned in this verse:—

1. Some with perfect mental concentration perceive the Self (*Ātmānam*) abiding in the body (*ātmani*) by the mind (ātmanā) through meditation (Bhakti Yoga).
2. Others who cannot achieve perfect concentration realise the Self by means of Saṅkhya Yoga (*Jñāna Yoga* — Gnosis) through an intellectual process which is a prelude to meditation.
3. Still others, incapable of intellectualisation (through *Jñāna Yoga*) and those capable, but preferring an easier method, and also some particular people — all these attain Self-realisation after first preparing themselves for meditation by means of selfless action (*Karma Yoga*) which contains within itself wisdom (*Jñana*).

anye tvevam ajānantaḥ śrutvānyebhya upāsate |
te'pi cātitarantyeva mṛtyuṃ śruti parāyaṇāḥ || 26 ||

26. But some, who do not know these [methods], having heard [the teachings] from others, meditate accordingly — these too, being devoted to what they hear, pass beyond death.

Commentary

It means that even those who are not spontaneously capable of Self-realisation by the practice of either Karma Yoga, Jñāna Yoga or Bhakti Yoga, but are devoted to merely listening to the teachings, are thereby transformed and eventually at some later stage begin the actual practice of the three Yogas, and become liberated from the cycle of births and deaths.

yāvat sañjāyate kiñcit sattvaṃ sthāvara jaṅgamam |
kṣetra kṣetrajña saṃyogāt tad viddhi bharatarṣabha || *27* ||

27. Whatever comes into being, whether it is moving or stationary[6], O Arjuna (Bharatarshabha), know that it is through the combination of the Kṣetra (body) and Kṣetrajña (knower of the Field).

samaṃ sarveṣu bhūteṣu tiṣṭhantaṃ parameśvaram |
vinaśyatsv-avinaśyantaṃ yaḥ paśyati sa paśyati || *28* ||

28. Whoever sees the supreme ruler abiding alike in all bodies and never perishing when they perish, he indeed has insight.

Commentary

One who sees the ātman as it really is, perceives it as:—

- a distinctive entity present in all embodied beings.
- as being 'the knower' and therefore of the same universal nature in all bodies,
- as imperishable

samaṃ paśyan hi sarvatra samavasthitam īśvaram |
na hinasty-ātmanātmānam tato yāti parāṃ gatim || *29* ||

29. For, seeing the ruler (Self) as equal and abiding alike in every place, one does not vitiate the Self by the self (mind) and therefore reaches the highest goal.

Commentary

Does not vitiate himself — harm himself by his [erroneous] perception of intrinsic ontological diversity but saves himself from Samsāra as a result of seeing the equality of the ātman everywhere as 'the cognising subject'.

prakṛtyaiva ca karmāṇi kriyamāṇāni sarvaśaḥ |
yaḥ paśyati tathātmānam akartāraṃ sa paśyati || *30* ||

30. One who sees that all acts are done universally by Prakrti alone and likewise that the ātman is not the doer, indeed has insight.

Commentary

The ātman, being comprised of consciousness, is not the doer, and that the ātman's conjunction with the Prakrti, and its controlling the body and its experience of happiness and misery are all the result of ignorance (ajñāna) in the form of Karma — then indeed one perceives the Self as it really is.

yadā bhūta pṛthag bhāvam ekastham anupaśyati |
tathaiva ca vistāram brahma saṃpadyate tadā || *31* ||

31. When one understands the independent individuality of all beings as being rooted in one basis, as also their evolution, then one attains to the Brahman.

Commentary

Although the general diversified states of existence of all beings are founded on the dual principles of Prakrti-Puruṣa; their particular individual characteristics and the basis for their personal evolution are rooted in 'one' common foundation which is the Prakrti, and not in the ātman. One then reaches the state of Great Expansion (Brahman). The meaning is that one attains the state of the Self free of limitations, in its pure form of [expanded] consciousness.

anāditvān nirguṇatvāt paramātmāyam avyayaḥ |
śarīrastho'pi kaunteya na karoti na lipyate || *32* ||

32. This supreme Self, though dwelling in the body, is immutable, O Arjuna, being without beginning. It neither acts nor is tainted, as it is free from the Gunas.

Commentary

Granted that the ātman being free from the Gunas, does not act; but how is it possible that the ātman is not tainted by its constant association with the character of the body? To this, Sri Krishna replies: —

yathā sarvagataṃ saukṣmyād-ākāśaṃ nopalipyate |
sarvatrāvasthito dehe tathātmā nopalipyate || *33* ||

33. As the all-pervading ether is not tainted because of its subtlety, even so, the ātman abiding in the body everywhere, is not tainted.

yathā prakāśayatyekaḥ kṛtsnaṃ lokam imaṃ raviḥ |
kṣetraṃ kṣetrī tathā kṛtsnaṃ prakāśayati bhārata || *34* ||

34. As the one sun illumines this whole world, so does the Knower of the Field (the Self), O Arjuna, illumine the whole Field (the body).

Commentary

The ātman whose nature has been described, is totally different from the body, because it is the subjective knower of the body which is the object of its knowledge, and is therefore different from it, even as the illuminating sun is totally different from the illumined world.

kṣetra kṣetrajñayor-evam antaraṃ jñāna-cakṣuṣā |
bhūta prakṛti-mokṣaṃ ca ye vidur-yānti te param || *35* ||

35. Those who thus discern with wise insight, the difference between the body (Field/Kṣetra) and the knower of the body (Field-knower /Kṣetrajña), and the means of deliverance from the manifested Material Nature (Prakrti) — they attain the Supreme.

Those persons, who, through the teaching imparted, understand the difference between the Self and Material Nature, and then learn about the virtues of humility etc., (13.7). and practice these virtues — they will thereby be completely liberated from bondage and will reach their essential ontological state characterised by infinite consciousness abiding in its own state.

hariḥ oṃ tatsat
iti śrīmad bhagavad gītāsūpaniṣatsu
brahma-vidyāyāṃ yoga-śāstre
śrī-kṛṣṇārjuna saṃvāde kṣetra-kṣetrajñā-vibhaga-yogo nāma
trayodaśo'dhyāyaḥ

Thus in the Upanishads of the Glorious Bhagavad Gita
The science of the Eternal, the Scripture of Yoga
The dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna
Ends the thirteenth discourse entitled
"Differentiation between Spirit & Matter"

Chapter 14

Guṇa-traya-vibhāga Yogaḥ

The Threefold Division of the Modes of Material Nature

Summary of the Teaching

In the thirteenth chapter it was taught that after learning the truth concerning the nature of Prakrti and Purusha and their mutual conjunction, one should cultivate the virtues of humility etc., together with devotion to the Lord as the means for liberation from bondage. And it was also stated in the verse — "Its attachment to these Gunas is the cause of birth in higher and lower wombs" (13.21) — the cause of bondage is attachment to pleasure etc., which arise from affiliation with the Gunas. Now, this chapter deals with the manner in which the Gunas become the cause of bondage and how their hold can be eliminated.

śri bhagavān uvāca

paraṃ bhūyaḥ pravakṣyāmi jñānānāṃ jñānam uttamam |
yaj-jñātvā munayaḥ sarve parāṃ siddhim ito gatāḥ || *1* ||

The Blessed Lord said

1. I shall teach again another kind of knowledge: the best of all forms of knowledge, by knowing which, all the sages have attained the state of perfection beyond this world.

Commentary

Krishna will now deliver the teaching about the Gunas — Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, which is distinct from what was taught earlier, but still in connection with the subject of Prakrti and Purusha.

idaṃ jñānam upāśritya mama sadharmyam āgatāḥ |
sarge'pi nopajāyante pralaye na vyathanti ca || 2 ||

2. Resorting to learning this and participating in My Being, they are not born at the time of universal projection, nor do they suffer at the time of its dissolution.

Commentary

"They who study [and assimilate] this teaching about to be expounded, attain qualities that are akin to Mine, and they attain a [metaphysical] similarity to Me".

mama yonir mahad-brahma tasmin garbham dadhāmyaham |
saṃbhavaḥ sarva bhūtānāṃ tato bhavati bhārata || *3* ||

3. My womb is the great Brahman (ie. Mūla-Prakrti), in that I lay the germ. From that, O Arjuna, are all beings born.

Commentary

Prakrti is designated here by the name '*the great Brahman*' because it is the cause of transformations of described in the text — 'Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intellect and ego-sense; thus My Prakrti is divided eightfold' (7.45). In the Vedas also, Prakrti is designated as Brahman in some places, for example in Mundaka Upanishad 1:1:9

The higher Prakrti which is the aggregate of sentient Jivas, mentioned in the passage — 'Know My higher Prakrti to be distinct from this; it is the life-principle' (Gita 7.5) — is

here expressed by the term 'Garbha' — germ, which means the source from which all living beings originate. In other words: "I lay the seed, consisting of the aggregate of sentient Jivas, in that great Mūla Prakrti, which is insentient and forms the matrix. From that conjunction between these two 'Prakrtis' brought about by My will, the emanation of all entities from Brahma down to a tuft of grass occurs".

sarva yoniṣu kaunteya mūrtayaḥ sambhavanti yāḥ |
tāsāṃ brahma mahad-yonir ahaṃ bīja-pradaḥ pitā || *4* ||

4. Whatever beings are produced in any species, O Arjuna, the Mūla-Prakrti is their great womb and I am the seed giving father.

Commentary

It means that Material Nature or the Mūla-Prakrti, [the evolution of which] begins with the Cosmic Mind (Mahat) and culminates with the appearance of the five elements, together with the aggregate of sentient Jīvas instilled in it by Me, is the cause of existence. I am the seed giving father means that I instil the aggregate of sentient jīvas [into Prakrti] according to each one's individual Karma.

sattvaṃ-rajas-tama iti guṇāḥ prakṛti saṃbhavāḥ |
nibadhnanti mahābāho dehe dehinam avyayam || *5* ||

5. Sattva, Rajas and Tamas are the Gunas that arise from Prakrti. They cause the bondage of the immutable Self to the body, O Arjuna.

Commentary

The three Modes of Material Nature — *Sattva* (harmony), *Rajas* (activity) and *Tamas* (inertia) — are inherent in the essential nature of Prakrti and are it's particular expressions. Their existence can be ascertained only through their effects such as enlightenment etc. They are not apparent in the unevolved state of Prakrti, but become apparent in the cosmic evolution. The Self is immutable, ie., it is not, in its natural state affected by the Gunas, but becomes 'bound by them' when residing in the body by virtue of the limiting conditions of being embodied.

tatra sattvaṃ nirmalatvāt prakāśakam anāmayam |
sukha-saṅgena badhnāti jñāna-saṅgena cānagha || *6* ||

6. Of these, Sattva, being pure is illuminating and free from morbidity. It causes bondage, O Arjuna, through attachment to pleasure and to learning.

Commentary

Sattva causes illumination on account of its being immaculate or free from all impurity. Purity being defined as a state free from conditions which hinder enlightenment and happiness. *'Illumination'* or enlightenment is the perception of things as they really are. It is 'free from morbidity' ie., it is not the cause of ill health, in other words, Sattva is that which is conducive to health.

Sattva, however, binds one [to samsāra] by causing attachment to enjoyment and learning. When attraction to learning and the pursuit of pleasure arises, one engages oneself in secular as well as religious means for obtaining them. Consequently, one is born in such bodies which constitute the means for experiencing their results. In other words — Sattva produces knowledge and happiness and again it causes attachment to them.

rajo rāgātmakaṃ viddhi tṛṣṇā-saṅga samudbhavam |
tan nibadhnāti kaunteya karma-saṅgena dehinam || *7* ||

7. Know, O Arjuna (Son of Kunti) that Rajas is of the nature of passion arising from craving and attachment, it causes the bondage of the embodied Self through attachment to action.

Commentary

'Rāga' (passion) is sexual attraction (libido). *'Tṛṣṇa'*, (craving) is the hankering for all the sense-objects. *'Saṅga'* (attachment) is the ardour for constant association with one's partner, progeny, friends and such other relations.

By creating a strong desire to act, Rajas binds one. All activities undertaken through craving for sense-gratification produce merit and demerit; these in turn perpetuate the cycle of rebirth. In other words — Rajas is the cause of the sex-drive, craving and attachment, and of constant engagement in activity.

tamas tvajñānajaṃ viddhi mohanaṃ sarva dehinām |
pramād-ālasya nidrābhis-tan nibadhnāti bhārata || *8* ||

8. Know that Tamas is born of nescience and causes the delusion of all embodied Selves. It causes bondage, O Arjuna, through negligence, indolence and sleep.

Commentary

Knowledge is defined as the perception of things as they really are — by *'nescience'* (ajñāna) is meant that which is opposed to it or false knowledge. *Tamas*, arising from false knowledge, deludes all beings. Delusion is mistaken comprehension; in other words, Tamas is the cause of error. Being the cause of negligence, indolence and sleep, it binds the embodied Atman. *'Negligence'* — is lack of attention, which causes one to do the wrong thing. *'Indolence'* — is the tendency to avoid work; it may even develop into complete inaction. *'Sleep'* — is the state of cessation of all externally directed activities due to exhaustion and the need to recover from the same. In *sleep (nidrā)* when only the externally directed action of the senses stops, [but the mind continues to function] it is called the *dream state (svapna).* When even the mental activity ceases it is called *dreamless sleep (suṣupti).*

sattvaṃ sukhe sañjayati rajaḥ karmaṇi bhārata |
jñānam āvṛtya tu tamaḥ pramāde sañjayaty-uta || *9* ||

9. The Mode of Sattva generates attachment to pleasure, Rajas to action, O Arjuna. But the Mode of Tamas, obscuring wisdom, generates attachment to negligence.

Commentary

The question arises:— 'the three Modes of Material Nature evolve from the essential nature of Prakrti, and develop into the psycho-physical being and therefore they always co-exist in all beings at all times. How, then, can they cause effects which are mutually contradictory? Sri Krishna replies: —

rajas tamaścābhibhūya sattvaṃ bhavati bhārata |
rajas sattvaṃ tamaścaiva tamas sattvaṃ rajas-tathā || *10* ||

10. Prevailing over Rajas and Tamas, Sattva [sometimes] prevails, O Arjuna. Overwhelming Tamas and Sattva, Rajas preponderates, overwhelming Rajas and Sattva, Tamas [sometimes] predominates.

Commentary

Even though all the three Gunas of Material Nature arise from the union of the Atman with Prakrti, yet owing to the precedence of previous Karmas and the difference in the food nourishing the body, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas are constantly in a state of struggle for supremacy.

Krishna teaches that this struggle of the Gunas can be inferred from observing the effects produced by them.

sarva dvāreṣu dehe'smin prakāśa upajāyate |
jñānaṃ yadā tadā vidyād vivṛddhaṃ sattvam ityuta || 11 ||

11. When the light of wisdom radiates from all the gateways (senses) of the body, then, one should know that Sattva prevails.

Commentary

When the light of enlightenment reveals the truth of things as they really are, through all the gateways of knowledge such as the eyes, ears, nose, touch, and taste; then one should know that Sattva operates.

lobhaḥ pravṛttir āraṃbhaḥ karmaṇām aśamaḥ spṛhā |
rajasyetāni jāyante vivṛddhe bharatarṣabha || 12 ||

12. Greed, activity, undertaking of projects, restlessness and craving — these arise, O Arjuna (Bull of the Bharatas), when Rajas is ascendant.

Commentary

'Greed' is the unwillingness to share one's own resources. *'Activity'* is [in this case] the tendency to be active without any definite useful purpose. *'Undertaking of projects'* refers to endeavours undertaken for the achievement of specific goals. *'Restlessness'* is incessant desire for sensual stimulation, *'craving'* is the desire for possessing objects.

aprakāśo'pravṛttiśca pramādo moha eva ca |
tamasyetāni jāyante vivṛddhe kuru-nandana || 13 ||

13. Non-illumination, inactivity, negligence and even delusion — these arise, O Arjuna (Joy-of-the-Kurus), when Tamas prevails.

Commentary

'Non-illumination' is the absence of wisdom. *'Inactivity'* is stupor. *'Negligence'* is carelessness resulting in wrong doing. *'Delusion'* is erroneous thinking.

yadā sattve pravṛddhe tu pralayaṃ yāti deha-bhṛt |
tadottama vidāṃ lokān amalān pratipadyate || 14 ||

14. If the embodied entity meets with disintegration when Sattva predominates, then it proceeds to the pure realms of those who know the highest Truth.

Commentary

If one happens to die when the Sattva Guna is dominant then one attains the assemblage of those [enlightened beings] who know the science of the ātman and who are free from ignorance. In other words one will be born in the families of those who have the knowledge of the Self, and will thus be qualified to perform those virtuous acts which are the means of attaining Self-realisation.

rajasi pralayaṃ gatvā karma saṅgiṣu jāyate |
tathā pralīnas tamasi mūḍha-yoniṣu jāyate || 15 ||

15. Meeting with disintegration when Rajas predominates one is born among those attached to action. Similarly, one who has met with disintegration when Tamas prevails, is born among species lacking in intelligence.

Commentary

Dying when Rajas is preponderant, one is reborn in the families of those who are motivated by the desire for achievement; one thus becomes qualified to perform those virtuous acts which lead to heaven and other such [material] benefits.

Similarly, one who dies when Tamas is preponderant is born among species lacking in intelligence, meaning one is reborn as one incapable of realising any [of the four] goals of human existence.

karmaṇaḥ sukṛtasyāhuḥ sāttvikaṃ nirmalaṃ phalam |
rajas-astu phalaṃ duḥkham ajñānaṃ tamasaḥ phalam || 16 ||

16. The result of a good deed, they say, is pure and is of the nature of Sattva, but the result of Rajas is suffering; and that of Tamas is ignorance.

Commentary

'Good deeds' are actions (*punya*) which are done without a desire for their rewards, they generate more Sattva than before and one becomes more pure, namely, devoid of the slightest vestige of suffering — so say those who know about the development of Sattva.

'*Suffering'* is continuation in Samsāra consisting of successive births in families attached to goal orientated actions. Rebirth of this type increases Rajas further, resulting in more self-gratifying achievements. 'Ignorance' is the result of Tamas predominating at the time of death, and means the continuation of successive states of ignorance.

What are the results such as purity etc., which are derived from the development of the three Modes? To this, Krishna answers: —

sattvāt sañjāyate jñānaṃ rajaso lobha eva ca |
pramāda-mohau tamaso bhavato'jñānam eva ca || 17 ||

17. From Sattva, wisdom arises, and from Rajas greed, from Tamas arise negligence and delusion, and indeed, ignorance.

ūrdhvaṃ gacchanti sattvasthā madhye tiṣṭhanti rājasāḥ |
jaghanya guṇa vṛttisthā adho gacchanti tāmasāḥ || 18 ||

18. Those who persist in Sattva rise upwards; those who abide in Rajas remain in the middle; and those, remaining in the lowest tendencies of Tamas go downwards.

Commentary

'*Those who persist in Sattva rise upwards'*, means they attain liberation from Samsāra in successive stages. Those who, *'abide in Rajas remain in the middle'* means they are born again in this world and pursue the same goal-orientated activities — this [vicious cycle] is mostly suffering, as it is characterised by continued rebirth.

'go downwards' means that they become increasingly more degenerate through the expansion of Tamas. And thus descend to the lowest state among human beings, then to the condition of animals; then to that of worms, insects etc., then of immovable things, and even to the condition of shrubs and creepers, and ultimately to the condition of stones, logs, clods, straw etc.

Sri Krishna now teaches how those in whom the Sattva has gradually increased by adopting special diet and performing selfless action rise upward by transcending the Gunas.

nānyaṃ guṇebhyaḥ kartāraṃ yadā draṣṭānupaśyati |
guṇebhyaśca paraṃ vetti madbhāvaṃ so'dhigacchati || 19 ||

19. When the enlightened one perceives no agent of action other than the Gunas, and knows that which transcends the Gunas, then one attains to My state.

Commentary

The enlightened one first has to completely repress the states of Rajas and Tamas and remain in a state of pure Sattva through consuming Sattvic food and performing selfless actions as service alone. The Self, essentially immaculate, acquires agency in respect of various actions, by its involvement with the Gunas — a condition arising from past Karmas. When one perceives that the Self in its essential state is not actually an agent but consists of infinite consciousness, one then attains similitude to Krishna.

guṇān etān atītya trīn dehī deha samudbhavān |
janma mṛtyu jarā duḥkhair vimukto'mṛtam aśnute || 20 ||

20. Transcending these three Gunas from which the body arises, the embodied Self, freed from birth, death, old age and suffering, attains immortality.

arjuna uvāca

kair-liṅgais trīn guṇān etān atīto bhavati prabho |
kim ācāraḥ kathaṃ caitāṃs trīn guṇān ativartate || 21 ||

Arjuna said:
21. What are the indications of one who has transcended the three Gunas? How does one behaviour? And how does one overcome the three Gunas?

Commentary

With what kind of behaviour is one associated and how does it serve as an indication for knowing one's inner state? — such is the meaning.

śrī bhagavan uvāca

prakāśaṃ ca pravṛttiṃ ca moham-eva ca pāṇḍava |
na dveṣṭi saṃpravṛttāni na nivṛttāni kāṅkṣati || 22 ||

The Blessed Lord said:
22. Illumination, activity and even delusion, O Arjuna, [he] resents not, while these prevail, nor longs for them when they are absent,

Commentary

One [who is liberated from the Gunas] does not resent the effects of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas known as enlightenment, industry and delusion, respectively, when they arise in regard to things different from the Self which are undesirable; nor does one crave the things that are different from the Self, but desirable, when they are withdrawn.

udāsīnavad āsīno guṇair yo na vicālyate |
guṇā vartanta ityeva yo'vatiṣṭhati neṅgate || 23 ||

23. He is said to transcended the Gunas, who remains like one indifferent, undisturbed by the Gunas; and who, knowing that it is the Gunas that are active, remains stable and does not act;

Commentary

He who remains like one indifferent — namely, who is joyful in the realisation of the ātman as being different from the Gunas and is unconcerned about material things and is not therefore disturbed through aversion and attraction and who remains quiescent, reflecting that the Gunas produce their own effects like illumination etc., and so remains inactive and does fall under the control of the Gunas.

sama duḥkha sukhaḥ svasthaḥ sama loṣṭāśma kāñcanaḥ |
tulya priyāpriyo dhīras-tulya nindātma saṃstutiḥ || *24* ||

24. One who is poised in pleasure and pain, who focuses within, to whom a clod, a stone and piece of gold are of equal value, who remains the same towards the pleasant and the unpleasant and who is intelligent, and regards both censure and praise of himself as equal;

mānāpamānayos tulyas tulyo mitrāri pakṣayoḥ |
sarvārambha parityāgī guṇātītaḥ sa ucyate || *25* ||

25. one who is the same in honour and dishonour, and the same to friend and foe, and who has abandoned all enterprises — such a person is said to have transcended the Gunas.

Commentary

'who focuses within,' means abiding in the ātman because of love for the ātman, and maintaining emotional equanimity in pleasure and pain arising from birth, transformation, sickness old age and death of one's children and other relatives and friends.

'*who regards any praise and blame as equal'* — realising that the good and bad characteristics one may possess are due merely to the fact of being human and identifying with the body rather than the Jīva, and as such are unconnected with the real Self.

'the same in honour and dishonour' — because these are feelings based on the misconception that the body is the Self; and 'the same to friend and foe' — because one understands that there is no [substantial] physical connection between oneself and others and who has thus abandoned all enterprises in which embodied beings are involved — these are the indications of one who is said to have transcended the Gunas.

māṃ ca yo'vyabhicāreṇa bhakti yogena sevate |
sa guṇān samatītyaitān brahma-bhūyāya kalpate || *26* ||

26. And by serving Me with unswerving devotion, one transcends the Gunas, and becomes fit to attain the state of Brahman.

Commentary

The state of transcendence of Gunas is not attained merely by reflecting on the difference between the Prakrti and the ātman as declared in the text such as "When the enlightened one perceives no agent of action other than the Gunas" (14:19) — for this perception is liable then, to be controverted by contrary subtle impressions (*saṃskāras*) which have accrued from beginingless time. One who, with unswerving one-pointed Loving Devotion, serves Krishna and takes refuge in Him transcends the Gunas which are otherwise insurmountable, and becomes worthy for the 'state of Brahman' (*brahma-bhūya*) — the meaning is that one attains cognisance of the Self as it really is; immortal and immutable.

brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhā'ham amṛtasyāvyayasya ca |
śāśvatasya ca dharmasya sukhasyaikāntikasya ca || *27* ||

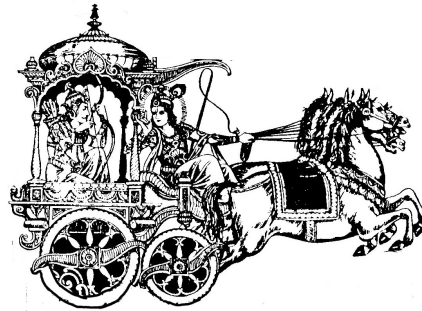
27. Verily, I am the ground of Matter as well as the immortal and immutable [Self], of everlasting Dharma and of perfect bliss.

Commentary

Although the expression *'everlasting Dharma'* is usually indicative of the practice [of Dharma or right-living] that leads to the goal; yet in the present context it denotes the actual goal to be obtained and not the practice.

The purport is this:— earlier it has been stated in the passage — 'For this divine Māya of Mine consisting of the three Gunas is hard to transcend, except for those who take refuge in Me alone...' (7.14) — that taking refuge in the Lord is the only means for transcending the Modes of Material Nature and the attainment of Self-realisation, supernal glory and unification with the Supreme Being. Thus, taking refuge (prapatti) with one-pointed mind is the only means for transcending the Gunas and for the attainment of the state of Brahman.

hariḥ oṃ tatsat
iti śrīmad bhagavad gītāsūpaniṣatsu
brahma-vidyāyāṃ
yoga-śāstre śrī kṛṣṇārjuna saṃvāde guṇa-traya-vibhaga-yogo nāma
caturdaśo'dhyāyaḥ

Thus in the Upanishads of the Glorious Bhagavad Gita
The science of the Eternal, the Scripture of Yoga
The dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna
Ends the fourteenth discourse entitled
"The threefold division of the modes of Material Nature"

Chapter 15

Puruṣottama Yogaḥ

The Mystery of the Omnipresent Supreme Being

Summary of the Teaching

In the 13th chapter the nature of Prakrti and Purusha was analysed; it was taught that from time out of mind the immaculate Jīva comprised entirely of infinite consciousness, conjoins with Material Nature (Prakrti), and is embodied in the forms of gods etc., This produces the cycle of attachment to the Modes of Material Nature (Gunas). Then followed in the 14th chapter the teaching concerning the Gunas was elaborated upon and then it was taught that Devotion to Krishna leads to detachment from the Gunas which in turn results in the realisation of the true nature of the Self.

Now in this 15th chapter, Sri Krishna, the adorable Lord reveals Himself as being in absolute control of the universe; both perishable (Kṣara) or bound Jīvas and the imperishable (Akṣara) or liberated Jīvas. He also states that He is the Supreme Being because of His supernal greatness in being antithetic to all that is negative and being the font of auspicious attributes. He is different in kind from both the perishable and imperishable Jīvas which constitute His Modes.

śrī bhagavan uvāca

ūrdhva mūlam adhaḥ śākham aśvatthaṃ prāhur-avyayam |
chandāṃsi yasya parṇāni yastaṃ veda sa vedavit || 1 ||

The Blessed Lord said:
1. They [the Vedas] speak of an indestructible Aśvattha tree with its roots above and branches below, the leaves of which are the injunctions; one who knows this knows the Vedas.

Commentary

The Vedas often depict Samsāra as the imperishable Aśvattha (banyan) tree having its roots above and branches below, in such passages as Ka. Up., 6:1 and Tait. Ar., 1.11.5

It has its 'roots above' since it arises from Brahma [the Creator or Hiranyagarbha] who is located beyond the seven realms. It has 'branches below' developing into beings like humans, animals, beasts, worms, insects, birds and plants and minerals. It is 'indestructible'   because it cannot be felled except with the dawn of perfect knowledge which causes detachment — it is like a flowing current.

The leaves of this Aśvattha tree are said to be the prescriptions of the Vedas because this tree of Samsāra grows by actions prompted by worldly desires as taught in specific passages.

The tree indeed flourishes with the help of these 'leaves'. One who knows the Aśvattha tree in this way 'knows the Vedas'.   The Veda also describes the means of felling this tree of Samsāra. One who understands this is called the 'knower of the Vedas', since knowledge of the nature of the tree to be cut down is helpful in deciding the means of felling the tree.

adhaścordhvaṃ prasṛtās tasya śākhāḥ guṇa-pravṛddhā viṣaya pravālāḥ |
adhaśca mūlāny-anusantatāni karmānubandhīni manuṣya-loke || 2 ||

2. Both above and below its branches spread out, nourished by the Gunas, the shoots are the sense-objects, and their dependant roots extend downward in the mortal world resulting in acts which bind (karma).

Commentary

This Aśvattha tree spreads downwards with humans and other beings, produced by their own respective Karmas, as branches. Other branches spread upwards in the forms of [celestial beings] such as Gandharvas, Yakṣas, Devas, etc. They are nourished by the three Modes of Material Nature. They have tender shoots in the form of sense-objects which are sound, sight, taste, feel and smell.

Sri Krishna explains how this happens;— the 'dependant roots' of this banyan tree with the main roots in the world of Brahma and its top in this mortal world extends downwards. These roots are the effects of karma which causes bondage. In other words, the effects of actions done in the human state bring about the further rebirth as humans, beasts etc., down below, and as celestial beings up above.

na rūpam asyeha tathopalabhyate nānto na cādir naca saṃpratiṣṭhā |
aśvattham enaṃ suvirūḍha-mūlam asaṅga śastreṇa dṛḍheṇa chitvā || 3 ||

3. Its form as such, is not perceived here, nor its end, nor its origin, nor its support. Having cut down this firmly rooted Aśvattha Tree with the strong axe of non-attachment,

Commentary

Humankind is at the pinnacle, our actions form the branches extending above and below as also its secondary roots — this form of the tree is not understood by those immersed in Samsāra. Similarly, it is not understood that the end [of Samsāra] can be brought about by non-attachment to pleasures which are founded upon the Gunas. It is also not perceived that attachment to the Gunas alone is the foundation of this tree. Nor is it realised that this tree is nourished by ignorance (ajñanam) which is the misconception that the body is the Self. Ignorance alone is the basis of this tree, since in it alone the tree is established.

This Aśvattha Tree is firmly-rooted — its roots are firm and manifold, and it is to be cut down with the strong axe of non-attachment, — namely the axe, forged by right knowledge of non-attachment to the enjoyable sense objects composed of the three Gunas.

tataḥ padaṃ tat parimārgitavyaṃ yasmin gatā na nivartanti bhūyaḥ |
tameva cādyaṃ puruṣaṃ prapadye yataḥ pravṛttiḥ prasṛtā purāṇī || 4 ||

4. One should then seek that goal, attaining which one never returns. One should take refuge in that Primal Person from whom this ancient process emanated.

Commentary

As one becomes free from attachment to sense-objects, one should seek and discover the ultimate goal from which one never returns. How can one bring an end to this beginingless attachment to sense objects? Sri Krishna now answers: — one should take 'refuge (*Prapadyet*) in the Primal Being' alone in order to overcome this ignorance. One should seek refuge in Him who is the Original One, namely, the source of all entities.

A variant reading of this stanza is *'prapadya iyatah pravrttih'* (in place of *prapadyet yatah pravrittih'*). This gives the sense that this process of taking refuge in the Supreme Being [prapatti] for the dispelling of ignorance has continued from a distant past. Even in the distant past there were those seeking liberation by this ancient means.

nirmāna mohā jita saṅga doṣā adhyātma nityā vinivṛtta kāmāḥ |
dvandvair vimuktāḥ sukha-duḥkha saṃjñāir gacchanty-amūḍhāḥ padam-avyayam tat || *5* ||

5. Free from delusions, having conquered the affliction of attachment, constant in the [contemplation of the] Self, having rejected desires and been liberated from the pairs of contrasts known as pleasure and pain, the undeluded attain that immutable goal.

na tad bhāsayate sūryo na śaśāṅko na pāvakaḥ |
yad gatvā na nivartante taddhāma paramaṃ mama || *6* ||

6. That supreme realm of Mine, after reaching which they do not return again [to Samsāra], is not illumined by the sun nor the moon, nor the fire.

Commentary

The Knowledge of the Self is indeed that which illuminates (reveals) everything else. External lights, however, are helpful only in removing the darkness which obstructs the contact between the senses and their objects. That supreme state of enlightenment is the supreme realm from which they do not return [to Samsāra] any more, it is My Supreme Abode; My glory (*Vibhuti*) — such is the meaning.

mamaivāṃśo jīva-loke jīva-bhūtas sanātanaḥ |
manaṣ ṣaṣṭhān-īndriyāṇi prakṛtisthāni karṣati || *7* ||

7. An everlasting part of Myself, having become the Jīvātman in the mortal world, acquires the [five] senses, and the mind which is the sixth, and abides in Prakrti.

Commentary

The ātman, even though an everlasting part of Myself, becomes bound in the cycle of transmigration. Enveloped by ignorance (avidya) in the form of beginingless karma, it enters into the bodies of various beings acquiring the five senses and the mind, which are specific modifications of Prakrti. Some parts of Myself (ie. Jīvas) become liberated from ignorance (avidya) in the aforesaid manner, and remain in their original pristine state. But the bound Jīvātman has its ability and knowledge inhibited. The Jīvātman participates in an organic synthesis with the body/body complex which is a specific modification of Material Nature resulting from Karma. Thus, in accordance with its Karma the Self manipulates the sense-faculties and the body.

śarīraṃ yad avāpnoti yaccāpy-utkrāmat-īśvaraḥ |
gṛhītvaitāni saṃyāti vāyur-gandhān ivāśayāt || *8* ||

8. Whatever body the ruler (Jīvātman) acquires and from whatever body it departs, it proceeds, taking with it these sense-faculties as the wind carrying fragrance from their places [in flowers].

Commentary

The Jīvātman is the lord of the body whanever it departs and goes on its way, it takes with it the [mental] sense-faculties and the elements, in a subtle form; just like the wind carrying the subtle fragrances from flower-garlands, sandal-paste, musk etc. from their sources and spreads them elsewhere.

śrotraṃ cakṣuḥ sparśanaṃ ca rasanaṃ ghrāṇam eva ca |
adhiṣṭhāya manaścāyaṃ viṣayān upasevate || *9* ||

9. Presiding over the ear, the eye, the sense of touch, the tongue, the nose, and the mind, it experiences these objects of the senses.

Commentary

Governing these [five] sense-organs, of which the mind is the sixth, the lord of the body (Jīvātman) projects the sense-faculties towards their corresponding objects like sound and the rest and enjoys them.

utkrāmantaṃ sthitaṃ vāpi bhuñjānaṃ vā guṇān-vitam |
vimūḍhā nānupaśyanti paśyanti jñāna-cakṣuṣaḥ || *10* ||

10. The deluded do not perceive it [the Jīvātman] conjoined with the Gunas when departing or staying or experiencing — only the enlightened ones see.

Commentary

The deluded are those who mistakenly take the body for the Self. However, those who possess the eye of knowledge, ie, have the wisdom to be able to discriminate between the body and the Self, perceive the Self as being existentially different from the body in all respects.

yatanto yoginaścainaṃ paśyanty-ātmany-avasthitam |
yatanto'pyakṛtātmāno nainaṃ paśyantyacetasaḥ || *11* ||

11. The striving practitioners of Yoga behold It (the ātman) abiding within themselves, but, strive as they may, those of unrefined mind, devoid of intelligence, perceive it not,

Commentary

The 'striving Yogis' are those who strive in the practice of Karma, Jñana and Bhakti Yoga, after taking refuge in Krishna.

Thus, the Jīvātman, both in the liberated and confined phases [of its being] is a manifestation of the glory (*Vibhuti*) of the Lord. Its light of consciousness illuminates even the luminaries such as the sun, moon and fire which facilitate the seeing process by removing the darkness that prevents the contact of the eye with objects. Now, Sri Krishna declares that even the light of the sun and other luminaries are also in fact Divine Forces.

yadādityagataṃ tejo jagad bhāsayate'khilam |
yaccandramasi yaccāgnau tat tejo viddhi māmakam || *12* ||

12. That light that is in the sun which illumines the whole universe, and that which is in the moon and in fire, know that light to be Mine.

Commentary

The Devas presiding over the Sun, Moon and Fire have all propitiated Krishna and thereby have been granted the capability of illumining.

gām āviśya ca bhūtāni dhārayāmy-aham ojasā |
puṣṇāmi cauṣadhīḥ sarvāḥ somo bhūtvā rasātmakaḥ || *13* ||

13. And pervading the earth I support all beings by My power. I nourish all herbs by becoming the Moon full of nectar.

Commentary

"Becoming the Moon (Soma) consisting of the essence of the ambrosia of immortality, I nourish all herbs".

ahaṃ vaiśvānaro bhūtvā prāṇināṃ deham āśritaḥ |
prāṇāpāna samāyuktaḥ pacāmyannaṃ caturvidham || 14 ||

14. Becoming the Vaishvanara Agni, I function within the bodies of all living beings. In association with the Prana and the Apana, I digest the four kinds of food.

Commentary

The *'Vaiśvānara Agni'* is the fire of digestion, in union with various activities of the breath; *Prāṇa* — inspiration, and *Apāṇa* — expiration, Krishna digests the *'four kinds of food'* eaten by beings — these are foods which need to be chewed, sucked, licked and drunk.

sarvasya cāhaṃ hṛdi sanniviṣṭo mattaḥ smṛtir jñānam apohanaṃ ca |
vedaiśca sarvair aham eva vedyo vedānta-kṛd vedavid eva cāham || 15 ||

15. And I am located in the hearts of all. From Me come memory, knowledge and their absence also. Indeed, I alone am that which is to be known from all the Vedas. I bring about the fruition of the rituals of Vedas; I alone am the knower of the Vedas.

Commentary

Controlling everything Krishna abides as the Overself in the hearts of all, namely, in the mind of all beings, from which arises knowledge and the motivation to engage in activity and inactivity. This is supported by various Vedic and Smriti texts.

Because Krishna is the Over-self, the faculty of memory in all beings can be said to arise from Him alone. *'Memory'* is cognition arising from the content of past experiences and their subtle impressions. 'Knowledge' is appraisement of a thing with the help of the senses, inference, verbal testimony and insight gained from meditation. *'Apohana'* means the cessation of knowledge. *'Apohana'* can also mean *'Uhana'* (conjectural knowledge) which is that secondary information which is an aid to the factual data (*Pramāṇa*). This is a process of determining whether the knowledge of the facts presented can be operative with reference to the particular subject-matter on hand, through the examination of the way in which the factual data was obtained — this is *'Uha'*.

I am the One to be known from all the Vedas because terms like Devas, humans etc., signify the Jīvas in them. I bring about the fruition of the Veda — *'Vedānta'*, in this context means [literally] the end, namely, the end result of Vedic injunctions to offer sacrifices. *'Veda-Anta-krt'* means 'the bestower of rewards of the actions prescribed in the Vedas'.

I alone am the knower of the Vedas; — I indeed know the Veda to be pertaining to Me in this manner. The idea is that anyone who claims the meaning of the Vedas to be different from this import, is not a "knower of the Vedas".

dvāvimau puruṣau loke kṣarāścākṣara eva ca |
kṣaraḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni kūṭastho'kṣara ucyate || 16 ||

16. There are two kinds of Selves (*puruṣas*) mentioned [in the Veda] — the perishable (*kṣara*) and the imperishable (*akṣara*). All beings are the perishable and the imperishable is [also] called the immutable (*kuṭastha*).

Commentary

The category of Purushas designated by the term *'perishable'* (*Kṣara*) refers to the Jīvas conjoined with mutable insentient Matter (Prakrti). Here the term 'Purusha' (Person or spirit) is used in the singular to indicate the single adventitious condition of being conjoined with insentient Matter.

The *'imperishable' (akṣara)* also called *'immutable' (kuṭastha),* is the category of liberated Jīvas, devoid of association with insentient matter, abiding in their own essential nature. The liberated Jīva is called 'immutable' because when it is free from insentient matter, it has no specific relationship with any of the particular transformations of insentient Matter. Here also the term is in the singular (as expressing a generic class) and denotes the single adventitious condition of dissociation from insentient matter. It does not mean that before this, in the course of time without beginning, there existed but a single liberated ātman for it is stated:— *'Many purified by the austerity of wisdom, have attained My state'* (4.10); and 'They are not born at the time of creation, nor do they suffer at the time of dissolution' (14.2).

uttamaḥ puruṣas-tvanyaḥ paramātmety-udāhṛtaḥ |
yo loka-trayam-āviśya bibharty-avyaya īśvaraḥ || *17* ||

17. Distinct from these is the Supreme Person, described as the Supreme Self [in the Vedas], He who pervading the threefold universe, supports it as the Immutable One and the Lord.

Commentary

The Supreme Being (*Paramātma*) is different from the bound and the liberated Jīvas who are expressed by the terms, the 'perishable' and the 'imperishable' respectively. How is He different? *'Pervading the threefold universe'* He supports it. *'Loka'* (realm) is that which is perceived and there are three such perceptible realms which are understood from the authority of the Scriptures. These are the realm of insentient matter, the realm of sentient Jīvas conjoined with matter, and the realm of liberated Jīvas. He enters into these three categories [of entities] as their Over-self and supports them. Thus, being the Pervader and Supporter He is [proven to be] an entity different from the triad [of entities].

yasmāt-kṣaram-atīto'ham akṣarād-api cottamaḥ |
ato'smi loke vede ca prathitaḥ puruṣottamaḥ || *18* ||

18. Because I transcend the perishable and am also higher than the imperishable, I am declared to be the Supreme Being (Purushottama) in the Smrti and the Veda.

Commentary

Because I transcend the '*perishable purusha'* — the bound Jīva, and I am higher than the '*imperishable purusha'* or liberated Jīva, I am therefore celebrated as the Supreme Being in the Sacred texts. The Smrti is called loka here by reason of revealing ('looking at') the meaning of the Veda. The meaning is [that I am thus known] both in the Shruti (Veda) and in the Smrti.

yo mām-evam asammūḍho jānāti puruṣottamam |
sa sarva-vid bhajati māṃ sarva bhāvena bhārata || *19* ||

19. Whoever, being free from all delusion, understands Me thus to be the highest Purusha — knowing all, he worships me in every way.

Commentary

"He worships Me in every way,' — in all the different modes of devotion that have been prescribed [in the Scriptures] as the means of attaining Me."

"All the love that arises in Me towards one strives to learn about Me and all the love that arises in Me towards one who worships Me in whatever way one chooses — both types of love are aroused by one who knows Me as described."

iti guhyatamaṃ śāstram idam uktaṃ mayā'nagha |
etad buddhvā buddhimān syāt kṛtakṛtyaśca bhārata || 20 ||

20. Thus, O sinless one, has this most mysterious doctrine been imparted by Me. By understanding this, O Arjuna one will become truly wise and will have fulfilled all duties.

Commentary

"I have revealed to you the most profound of all mysteries about Me as the Supreme Being, because you are worthy to receive this instruction due to being sinless. By understanding this, one will become truly wise and will have fulfilled all duties. — whatever knowledge has to be gained for attaining Me, is hereby acquired and whatever obligation has to be fulfilled in this connection — all that is to be taken as fulfilled by knowing this (the Purushottama Vidya)."

In this stanza it is intimated that the knowledge of the Supreme Being acquired through the Scriptures achieves all this, but it does not give direct experience of God.

hariḥ oṃ tatsat
iti śrīmad bhagavad gītāsūpaniṣatsu
brahma-vidyāyāṃ
yoga-śāstre śrī kṛṣṇārjuna saṃvāde puruṣottama yogo nāma
pañcadaśo'dhyāyaḥ

Thus in the Upanishads of the Glorious Bhagavad Gita
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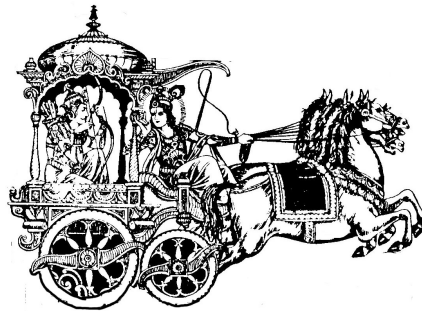

Chapter 16

Daivāsura Sampad Vibhāga Yogaḥ

The Division between the Divine and the Non-Divine.

Summary of the Teaching

In the preceding three chapters the following teachings were given: —

The true nature of the Material World (Prakrti), and the Jivatman (Purusha), both in isolation as well as in conjunction with each other;

Attachment is the cause for their [continued] conjunction and non-attachment leads to their separation;

Both Prakrti and the Purusha in whatever modes of existence they may be, constitute the plenary expansion (Vibhuti) of the Lord; and

The Lord is truly the Supreme Being who is distinct from insentient matter and sentient Jiva in both the states of bondage and liberation, because He is immutable, all-pervading — the Supporter and the Ruler of all.

In this chapter, the Lord describes the characteristics of those who belong to the Divine Establishment — those who submit to the teachings of Śāstra and those of the Non-Divine Establishment — those who do not — in order to reinforce the point that reliance on the authority of Śāstra is the essential basis for all the teachings given earlier.

śrī bhagavān uvāca

abhayaṃ sattva saṃśuddhiḥ jñāna yoga vyavasthitaḥ |
dānaṃ damaśca yajñāśca svādhyāyas tapa ārjavam || 1 ||

The Blessed Lord said:
1. Fearlessness, purity of mind, consistent contemplation on wisdom, philanthropy, self-control, worship, study of Vedas, self-discipline, forthrightness,

Commentary

'Fear' — is defined as anxiety that arises from the perception of [future] suffering in the form of separation from cherished things or association with adverse objects — the absence of this emotion is 'fearlessness'.

'Purity of mind' — the Sattvic condition of the mind being freed from Rajas and Tamas.

'Consistent contemplation on wisdom' — steady persistence in discriminating between the true nature of the Self and of Prakrti.

'Philanthropy' — giving away one's wealth earned through right means to the deserving poor.

'Self-control' — the practice of withdrawing the mind from sense-objects.

'Worship' — the performance of the fivefold sacrifices (pañca-mahā-yajña) and other rituals simply as service to the Lord without attachment to the merit obtained.

'Study of the Vedas' — regular study of the Vedas with the conviction that all the teachings of the Vedas deal with the Lord, with His glories and with the mode of worshipping Him.

'Self-discipline' — the practice of penances like Krcchra & Candrayana; fasting on the twelfth day of the lunar fortnight, etc., which foster an inclination for performing acts pleasing to the Lord.

'forthrightness' — consistency in thought, word and deed in one's dealings with others.

ahiṃsā satyam akrodhas tyāgaḥ śāntir apaiśunam |
dayā bhūteṣv-aloluptaṃ mārdavaṃ hrīr acāpalam || 2 ||

2. Non-injury, truthfulness, freedom from anger, renunciation, tranquillity, freedom from slandering, compassion to all beings, freedom from hankering, gentleness, modesty, freedom from whimsicality;

Commentary

'Non-injury' — abstaining from causing pain to other beings.

'Truthfulness' — communicating what one knows for certain and what is conducive to the good of others.

'Freedom from anger' — the absence of mental agitation which could lead to the injury of others.

'Renunciation' — the giving up of everything that is contrary to the good of the Self.

'Tranquillity' — practice of restraining the senses from their predilection for sense-objects.

'freedom from slandering' — refraining from talk that may cause hurt to others.

'Compassion to all beings' — the inability to abide the suffering of others.

'Freedom from hankering' (*Aloluptvam*) — freedom from craving for sense-gratification.

'Gentleness' — absence of harshness, and being worthy of associating with the good people.

'Modesty' — the feeling shame in doing what should not be done.

'Freedom from whimsicality' (*Acapalam*) — being unmoved by enjoyable objects even when they are at hand.

tejaḥ kṣamā dhṛtiḥ śaucam adroho nātimānitā |
bhavanti sampadaṃ daivīṃ abhijātasya bhārata || 3 ||

3. Refulgence, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, freedom from spite and humility these treasures, O Arjuna, belong to one who is born to a Divine Estate.

Commentary

'refulgence' (*tejah*) — the virtue of not being influenced by the wicked.

'Forgiveness' — freedom from the feelings of animosity towards others even when they are the cause of suffering.

'Fortitude' — the determination to do the right thing even under conditions of great danger.

'Purity' — fitness of the body and the mind, as prescribed in the Scriptures, for the performance of right conduct.

'Freedom from spite' (*adroha*) — the avoidance of interfering in the freely chosen activities of others.

'Humility' — freedom from misplaced pride (Atimānita); that is, excessive unjustified self-esteem.

These are the virtues that are found in one destined for a 'divine estate'. The 'Divine' are those who live in harmony with the Divine Nature. The meaning is that these virtues are endowments in those who are born with a natural affinity for them and that seek to actualize them.

dambho darpo'bhimānaśca krodhaḥ pāruṣyam eva ca ।
ajñānaṃ cābhijātasya pārtha sampadam āsurīm ॥ *4* ॥

4. Religious hypocrisy, hubris, self-conceit, anger, rudeness and ignorance these, O Arjuna, belong to one who is born to a non-Divine estate.

Commentary

'Religious hypocrisy' — (*dambha*) is making a show of the practice of Dharma for earning a reputation for righteousness.

'hubris' — (*darpa*) the elation caused by sense-gratification and the consequent inability to discriminate between what ought to be done and what ought not to be done.

'Self-conceit' — (*abhimāna*) the estimation of oneself to a degree not warranted by one's education and birth.

'Anger' — (*krodha*) the agitation of the mind which leads to causing injury to others.

'Rudeness' — (*paruṣyam*) is the disposition of causing anxiety to good people.

'Ignorance' — (*ajñānam*) is inability to discriminate between high and low principles, and between what ought to be done and what ought not to be.

These are the qualities that are found in one born for a Non-Divine Estate. The 'Non-Divine' are those who are not in harmony with the Divine Nature.

daivī sampad vimokṣāya nibandhāyāsurīm matā ।
mā śucaḥ sampadaṃ daivīm abhijāto'si pāṇḍava ॥ *5* ॥

5. The Divine Estate is deemed to lead to Liberation, the Non-divine to bondage. Grieve not, O Arjuna, you are born to a Divine Estate.

Commentary

'The Divine Estate — which is characterized by conformity to the teachings of the Lord aids the achievement of Liberation. The meaning is, that it leads step by step to the attainment of Krishna. *'The Non-Divine Estate* — which is characterised by rejection of the teachings leads to continued bondage — it results in spiritual degradation.

dvau bhūta sargau loko'smin daiva āsura eva ca ।
daivo vistaraśaḥ proktaḥ āsuraṃ pārtha me śṛṇu ॥ *6* ॥

6. There are the two types of beings that have been produced in this world — the Divine and the Non-divine. The Divine has been described at length. Hear from Me, O Arjuna, about the Non-divine.

Commentary

In this realm of [volitional] action (*karma-loka*), these are the two categories of beings who act. '*Emanation*' (*sarga*) means '*production*' ie. by the influence of previous

karma resulting from positive and negative deeds. Sentient beings are born into either one of these two categories — for either working in harmony with the Divine Will or acting contrary to it. Of these, the Divine-estate that is to say; the paths of Karma, Jñana and Bhakti Yogas have been described at length so that the good may fulfil the purpose of their birth by following these teachings. Now hear about the conduct which is the destiny of those born in the later category; —

pravṛttiṃ ca nivṛttiṃ ca janā na vidurāsurāḥ |
na śaucaṃ nāpi cācāro na satyaṃ teṣu vidyate || *7* ||

7. The Non-divine know neither the right action nor what to refrain from. Neither purity, nor right conduct nor truthfulness is found in them.

Commentary

'right action nor what to refrain from,' — that is, the Vedic Dharma that leads to prosperity and Liberation.

'Purity' is the prerequisite for performing Vedic rites as established in the Scriptures, that 'purity', be it external or internal, is alien to the non-divine.

'Right conduct,' — observances by means of which mental and physical purity arises, even this right conduct is alien to them.

asatyam apratiṣṭhaṃ te jagad-āhur anīśvaram |
aparaspara sambhūtaṃ kim anyat kāma haitukam || *8* ||

8. They say; "This universe is unreal, without any foundation and without a Controller (Iśvara), brought about by mutual union, with lust for its cause; what else?"

Commentary

They (certain schools of philosophy) maintain that the universe is *'unreal'* — they do not accept that this universe, which is the manifestation of Brahman and is denoted by the term Reality (*Satya*), has Brahman for its Self. They contend that it has no '*foundation*,' — they do not accept that Brahman is the substrata of the universe.

etāṃ dṛṣṭim avaṣṭabhya naṣṭātmāno'lpa buddhayaḥ |
prabhavanty-ugra karmāṇaḥ kṣayāya jagato'hitāḥ || *9* ||

9. Holding this view, these embittered ruined people of deficient intellects commit many atrocities that lead to the destruction of the world.

kāmam āśritya duṣpūraṃ dambha māna madānvitāḥ |
mohād gṛhītvāsadgrahān pravartante 'śuci-vratāḥ || *10* ||

l0. Filled with insatiable desires, grabbing through delusion unjustly acquired resources, and committed to vicious resolutions, they act, full of ostentation, pride and arrogance.

cintām aparimeyāṃ ca pralayāntām upāśritāḥ |
kāmopabhoga paramā etāvad iti niścitāḥ || *11* ||

11. Subject to immeasurable anxieties, which extend to the very dissolution of the universe, regarding sense-gratification as their highest ideal, and convinced that this is all;

Commentary

Those who are about to die today or tomorrow [still] obsess themselves with anxiety in regard to objects, the attainment of which is not possible even if they lived until the dissolution of the universe. Likewise, they are convinced that the satisfaction of sensual enjoyments is the highest goal of human life. They that there is no aim in human life greater than this.

āśā-pāśa śatair baddhāḥ kāma krodha parāyaṇāḥ |
īhante kāma bhogārtham anyāyenārtha sañcayān || 12 ||

12. Bound by hundreds of fetters of hopes, preoccupied with desire and anger, they strive by unjust means to amass resources for the gratification of their desires.

idam-adya mayā labdham imaṃ prāpsyase manoratham |
idam astīdam api me bhaviṣyati punar dhanam || 13 ||

13. "This I have gained today, and this aspiration I shall fulfil. This wealth is mine, and that also shall be mine in the future".

asau mayā hataḥ śatrur haniṣye cāparān api |
īśvaro'ham ahaṃ bhogī siddho'haṃ balavān sukhī || 14 ||

14. 'This enemy is slain by me; and others also I shall slay. I am a Lord, I am an enjoyer, I am successful, I am powerful and happy.

Commentary

Here the concept of spiritual recompense (*adṛṣṭa*), is regarded only as an invention of weak people of feeble minds. Furthermore: *'I am a lord'* — I am independent, and I control others. *'I am an enjoyer'* — I enjoy through my own achievements and not through karma or Divine Grace. *'I am successful,'* — I am the creator of my own success and not through karma etc. Likewise, *I am also powerful and happy* — through my own self-effort.

āṣyo'bhijanavān asmi ko'nyosti sadṛśo mayā |
yakṣye dāsyāmi modiṣye ityajñāna vimohitāḥ || 15 ||

15. 'I am wealthy and nobly-born; who else is equal to me? I shall sacrifice, I shall give charity, I shall rejoice' — thus they think, deluded by ignorance.

anekacitta vibhrāntāḥ moha-jāla-samāvṛtāḥ |
prasaktāḥ kāma bhogeṣu patanti narake'śucau || 16 ||

16. Bewildered by many fantasies, ensnared by the net of delusion, addicted to sensual enjoyments, they fall into a foul purgatory.

Commentary

Rejecting the doctrine of Karma, Divine Grace and other factors in their achievements and believing them to be due entirely to personal efforts, they are confounded by many goal oriented projects — and in this way they are ensnared by the net of delusion.

ātma-saṃbhāvitāḥ stabdhā dhana-māna-madānvitāḥ |
yajante nāma yajñāis-te daṃbhenāvidhi pūrvakam || 17 ||

17. Self-conceited, complacent, intoxicated with pride and wealth, they perform sacrifices in name only with ostentation and contrary to the injunctions of the Śāstras.

Commentary

They are *'self-conceited'* — they are held in high esteem by themselves only. They are *'complacent'* — regarding themselves as perfect, they do nothing [to improve themselves spiritually]. How? They are *'intoxicated with pride and wealth'* — they are obsessed by wealth and pride of learning and descent. *'They perform sacrifices in name only'* — they perform sacrifices in order to obtain renown as the performers of sacrifice. These are performed with pretension and for self-aggrandisement and not in accordance with the proper directions of the Scriptures.

ahaṅkāraṃ balaṃ darpaṃ kāmaṃ krodhaṃ ca saṃśritāḥ |
mām-ātma para-deheṣu pradviṣanto'bhyasūyakāḥ || 18 ||

18. Overcome with egoism, power, conceit, desire and anger, these malicious people hate Me in their own bodies and in those of others.

Commentary

They depend entirely upon their own egos thinking— 'I can do everything without the help of anyone'; likewise, in all their doings they depend on their own power — this leads to conceit ('there is nobody like me'), and then to desire ('Because I am who I am, my mere desire will become actualised.') Anger manifests in the thought of — 'l shall destroy all those who cross me.' Thus, being overcome by these ideas, they display malice towards Krishna, the Supreme Being and the Controller abiding in their own bodies as well as in the bodies of others; and they abuse and hate Krishna. They invent fallacious arguments to discredit Him, and being unable to tolerate Him, they perform all acts like sacrifices etc., with complete egocentricity.

tān ahaṃ dviṣataḥ krūrān saṃsāreṣu narādhamān |
kṣipāmy-ajasram aśubhān āsurīṣveva yoniṣu || 19 ||

19. These wicked people who are hostile, cruel, and the most contemptible of humankind, I hurl continually into the cycles of births and deaths, into the non-Divine species.

Commentary

The meaning is that Krishna will confirm their malevolent disposition so that they would be impelled to do things which lead to prolonging the cycle of reincarnation.

āsurīṃ yonim āpannā mūḍhā janmani janmani |
mām aprāpyeva kaunteya tato yānty-adhamāṃ gatim || 20 ||

20. Fallen into demoniac species and deluded birth after birth, and without attaining Me O Arjuna, they sink down to the lowest state.

Commentary

They are born in conditions that are not conducive to obtaining Krishna and remain deluded — that is, remaining ignorant or misinformed about Him. They never 'attain Me,' — that is, realise that Krishna, the Lord and the ruler of all, truly exists. They sink farther and farther down, from that birth, to the lowest level.

Sri Krishna proceeds to explain the root-cause of the perdition of the one of demoniac nature: —

trividhaṃ narakasyedaṃ dvāraṃ nāśanam ātmanaḥ |
kāmaḥ krodhas tathā lobhas tasmād etat trayaṃ tyajet || 21 ||

21. Self-referent desire, anger and greed — this is the threefold gateway to Naraka, ruinous to the Self. Therefore one should abandon these three.

Commentary

Those three negative emotions:— *self-referent-desire* (*kāma*), *anger* (*krodha*) and *greed* (*lobha*) constitute the triple gateway to purgatory for those of demoniac disposition, and are destructive of the Self (*ātman*). The nature of these three has already been explained. 'Gateway' (*dvāra*) means the path or the cause. Therefore, since they constitute the cause of the extremely dreadful condition of Purgatory (*naraka*), one should wholly renounce this triad — selfish-desire, wrath and greed.

etair vimuktaḥ kaunteya tamo dvārais tribhir naraḥ |
ācaraty-ātmanaḥ śreyas tato yāti parāṃ gatim || 22 ||

22. One who has been liberated from these three gates to darkness, O Arjuna, practices what is beneficial to the Self and hence reaches the Supreme State.

yaḥ śāstra vidhim utsṛjya vartate kāma kārataḥ |
na sa siddhim avāpnoti na sukhaṃ na parāṃ gatim || 23 ||

23. Whoever disregarding the ordinances of the Scriptures, acts under the influence of personal desire, attains neither perfection nor happiness, nor the Supreme State.

Commentary

One who rejects the injunctions given in the Vedas and follows the direction of one's own wishes, does not achieve any form of perfection relating to the hereafter, nor finds the slightest happiness in this world, nor the attainment of the Supreme State. If there is no striving for perfection or happiness how can one expect the Supreme State? — such is the meaning.

tasmāt śāstra pramāṇaṃ te kāryākārya vyavasthitau |
jñātvā śāstra vidhān-oktaṃ karma kartum ihārhasi || 24 ||

24. Therefore, let the Śāstra be your authority for determining what should be done and what should not be done. Having learnt what is enjoined in the Śāstra, you should act .

Commentary

Hence, the Śāstra is to be regarded as the only authority in deciding what ought to be accepted and what ought to be rejected. You should try to understand, neither more nor less than what constitutes the Truth and act according to the injunctions of the Śāstras. The Highest Truth which is revealed in the Vedas is the Supreme Being; and the Vedic ordinances which are supplemented by the instructions of the Dharma-Śāstras, the Epics (Ramayana and Mahabharata) and the Puranas, are the acts which are the means for reaching Him and for pleasing Him. Having learnt them, you should accept them alone and act accordingly.

hariḥ oṃ tatsat
iti śrīmad bhagavad gītāsūpaniṣatsu
brahma-vidyāyāṃ yoga-śāstre
śrī kṛṣṇārjuna saṃvāde daivāsura -sampad-vibhāga-yogo nāma
ṣoḍaśo'dhyāyaḥ

Thus in the Upanishads of the Glorious Bhagavad Gita
The science of the Eternal, the Scripture of Yoga
The dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna
Ends the sixteenth discourse entitled
"The Division between the Divine and the Non-Divine"

Chapter 17

Śraddhā-traya-vibhāga Yogaḥ

The Three Classifications of Conviction.

Summary of the Teaching

In the [previous] chapter, after expounding the division [of beings] into two classes — Divine and Non-divine, it was revealed that the knowledge of Reality and the means for acquiring it have their source in the Vedas alone. Now [in this chapter] it will be taught that whatever is not enjoined by the Scriptures is ineffectual, because it is 'non-divine', furthermore actions enjoined by the Scriptures are categorised into three kinds according to the Gunas. The definition of what [exactly] is established in the Scriptures will also be given.

Arjuna, unable to understand why works not enjoined by the Scriptures are futile, sincerely asks about the different kinds of results, in terms of the three Gunas, arising from works such as sacrifices that are not enjoined in the Scriptures, but are done with conviction: —

arjuna uvāca

ye śāstra vidhim utsṛjya yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ |
teṣāṃ niṣṭhā tu kā kṛṣṇa satvam āho rajas tamaḥ || *1* ||

Arjuna said
1. What is the position O Krishna of those who disregard the injunctions of the Shastra, yet worship with conviction (śraddhā)? Is it Sattva, Rajas or Tamas'?

śrī bhagavān uvāca

trividhā bhavati śraddhā dehināṃ sā svabhāvajā |
sātvikī rājasī caiva tāmasī ceti tāṃ śṛṇu || 2 ||

The Blessed Lord said:
2. Threefold is the conviction of embodied beings, inherent in their own nature, classified as Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic — listen to the teaching about it.

Commentary

The conviction (*śraddhā*) of all embodied beings arises from their natural disposition (*svabhāva*) — one's own character. Śraddhā is the peculiar state or predilection (ruci = taste) caused by past habitual tendencies (*vāsanas*). One develops a conviction in accordance with one's natural taste. For 'conviction' (*śraddhā*) is defined as enthusiasm for a certain method by which one believes one will achieve one's desired goals.

Vāsana (habitual pattern formation), *Ruci* (taste) and *Śraddhā* (conviction) are the characteristics of the Self which arise from it's identification with the three modes of Material Nature. The three Modes (Gunas) are the different states of the body, the senses, the mind and sense-objects. These states arise in one through the subtle impressions caused by association with Gunas in sense experiences.

These three Modes of Material Nature can only be established from their effects. Habits, taste and convictions originate from personal experiences with the external world comprised of the three Modes. Thus conviction is categorised as being in the mode of Goodness, Passion or Ignorance — now listen.

sattvānurūpā sarvasya śraddhā bhavati bhārata |
śraddhāmayo'yaṃ puruṣo yo yacchraddhaḥ sa eva saḥ || 3 ||

3. The conviction of each person, O Arjuna, is in accordance with one's character. A person consists of conviction, and whatever one's conviction is, that verily one is.

Commentary

The meaning is that one's efforts are directed towards projects that reflect the predominant state of one's mind. The term 'character' (*sattvānurūpa*) used here includes the body, senses and other things already mentioned. A person consists of conviction, — in other words one is the product of one's conviction; that verily one is; — one becomes an embodiment of that particular kind of conviction. The purport is this:— the attainment of results is mainly dependant on one's convictions, if one has conviction in doing an act of virtue, one will obtain the fruit of such actions.

yajante sātvikā devān yakṣa rakṣāṃsi rājasāḥ |
pretān bhūtagaṇāṃścānye yajante tāmasā janāḥ || 4 ||

4. The Sattvic types worship the gods. The Rajasic types worship Yakshas and Rakshasas, and the others, classified as Tamasic, worship Pretas and the host of Bhūtas.

Commentary

Those who are predominantly in the Mode of Goodness worship the gods. In other words, the conviction that the worship of the gods leads to supreme joy, unassociated with suffering is categorised as Sattvic in nature. Those in the Mode of Passion worship Nature Spirits (Yakṣas) and Protectors (Rakshasas). The others, who are in the Mode of Ignorance, worship disembodied spirits (Pretas) and the hosts of elementals (Bhūtas). The conviction associated with Passion brings about limited joy intermingled with suffering, while the conviction arising from Ignorance gives rise to extremely limited joy verging on suffering.

Thus there are varying types of results regarding the worship and other acts which are enjoined in the Scriptures and are done with conviction . However, no happiness whatsoever will result from the performance of charity, tapas (self-discipline) and sacrifices etc., not enjoined in the Scriptures and therefore in violation of Krishna's teachings. In fact only calamity results from them. Sri Krishna proceeds to explain this more fully.

aśāstra vihitaṃ ghoraṃ tapyante ye tapo janāḥ |
dambhāhaṅkāra saṃyuktāḥ kāma rāga balānvitāḥ || 5 ||

5. Those who practice severe self-discipline (tapas) not enjoined by the Śāstras, through ostentation and egoism, and impelled by the force of passion and attachment;

karṣayantaḥ śarīrasthaṃ bhūta-grāmam acetasaḥ |
māṃ caivāntaḥ śarīrasthaṃ tān viddhyāsura niścayān || 6 ||

6. These foolish people, torture the material components of their bodies and Me also who dwell within the body — know them to be non-divine in their faith.

Commentary

'Those who engage in self-disciplinary programs not enjoined by the Scriptures even though they may be intense' — is a statement representative of all sacrifices and other religious works not enjoined by the Scriptures and which demand much exertion. They are undertaken by arrogant and self-centred practitioners and are motivated by sensual desire, attachment and passion.

The Threefold Classification of Food.

Now, Sri Krishna, resuming the topic under discussion, elaborates on the categorisation of sacrifices and other works enjoined by the Scriptures according to the Gunas. To begin with, He categorises food into three kinds because food is the basis for the development of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas as declared by the Scriptures:—

> 'For the mind my dear, consists of food' (Cha. Up., 6.5.4) and
> 'when the food is pure, the mind becomes pure' (Cha. Up., 7.26.2).

āhāras-tvapi sarvasya trividho bhavati priyaḥ |
yajñās tapas tathā dānaṃ teṣāṃ bhedam imaṃ śṛṇu || 7 ||

7. The food which is preferred by each, is threefold, as are the sacrifices, self-discipline and philanthropy. Now listen to their differentiation.

āyuḥ sattva bal-ārogya sukha prīti vivardhanāḥ |
rasyāḥ snigdhāḥ sthirā hṛdyā āhārāḥ sātvika priyāḥ || 8 ||

8. A diet which promotes longevity, intellectual alertness, energy, health, pleasure and cheerfulness and those that are succulent, nutritional, substantial and agreeable, are preferred by Sattvic people.

Commentary

Intellectual alertness (*Sattva*) — in this context the term *'Sattva'* means mind, and refers indirectly to the power of thinking. For the Sattva Guna promotes the development of learning, as previously declared:— *'From Sattva knowledge arises'* (14.17).

At the time of ingestion the Sattvic foods in themselves cause pleasure. They are *succulent* — full of sweet juices. *Nutritional* — full of oil. They are *substantial* — that is produce long lasting effects. They are *agreeable* — they are presented in a pleasing manner.

kaṭvamla lavaṇāty-uṣṇa tīkṣṇa rūkṣa vidāhinaḥ |
āhārāḥ rājasasyeṣṭā duḥkha śokāmaya pradāḥ || 9 ||

9. Foods that are bitter, sour, very salty, very hot, very sharp, astringent and heating, are all dear to Rajasic people, they produce pain, discomfort and disease.

Commentary

Sharp foods are those which are difficult to take due to being icy cold, or extremely hot. Astringent things are those which cause the feeling of dryness in the eater. Heating foods are those which cause burning sensation.

yāta-yāmaṃ gata-rasaṃ pūti paryuṣitaṃ ca yat |
ucchiṣṭam api cāmedhyaṃ bhojanaṃ tāmasa priyam || 10 ||

10. Foods which are stale, tasteless, foul, putrid, left-over and impure, are loved by Tamasic people.

Commentary

Stale (*yāta-yāmam*) — that food which has been left standing for more than three hours. *Tasteless* (*gata-rasam*) — that which has lost its natural flavour. *Foul* (*pūti*) — emitting a bad smell. *Putrid* (*paryuṣitam*) — fermented over a long period. *Left-over* (*ucchiṣṭam*) — the food that remains after have being eaten by persons other than Gurus, parents or elder siblings. *Impure* (*amedhyam*) — that which is unfit for offering

in sacrifice or worship. The meaning is that, being unfit for offering in worship, they cannot become prasādam.

The Three Grades of Spiritual Practice.

aphalā-kāṅkṣibhir yajño vidhi dṛṣṭo ya ijyate |
yaṣṭavyam eveti manaḥ samādhāma sa sātvikaḥ || 11 ||

11. The Sattvic yajña (sacrifice) is one that is offered by one without a desire for reward and with the conviction that it should be performed as enjoined in the Śāstras.

Commentary

The act of worship considered to be in the Mode of Goodness is offered by those desiring no reward, with the firm conviction that it ought to be performed for its own sake — simply as adoration of the Lord and according to the injunctions of the Scriptures, ie., with the prescribed texts, right materials and proper rituals.

abhisandhāya tu phalaṃ dambhārtham api caiva yat |
ijyate bharata-śreṣṭha taṃ yajñāṃ viddhi rājasam || 12 ||

12. That yajña which is offered, O Arjuna, with an expectation of reward and for the sake of ostentation, know that to be Rajasic.

vidhi hīnam asṛṣṭānnaṃ mantra-hīnam adakṣiṇam |
śraddhā virahitaṃ yajñāṃ tāmasaṃ paricakṣate || 13 ||

13. That yajña which is not based upon Scriptural authority, with unsanctioned offerings, devoid of the recitation of mantras, lacking in gifts of appreciation and faith—that is considered to be Tamasic.

Commentary

That yajña is considered to be in the Mode of Ignorance, which is not authorised by the Brāhmaṇas of learning and good conduct, with unsanctioned offerings (*Asrstanna*) — in which the offerings consist of substances not sanctioned by the Scriptures; which is performed without the chanting of mantras; and in which no gifts of appreciation are distributed [to the officiating priests & gurus] and in which there is no sincere devotion.

The Threefold Division of Tapas (self-discipline)

deva dvija guru prājñā pūjanaṃ śaucam ārjavam |
brahmacaryam ahiṃsā ca śārīraṃ tapa ucyate || 14 ||

14. Adoration of the gods, the twice-born, the preceptors, the enlightened ones, purity, rectitude, chastity and non-injury, these are said to be the physical disciplines.

Commentary

purity — through ablutions in sacred water; *rectitude* —harmony of thought and action; *chastity* — avoidance of considering others as mere objects of pleasure; *non-injury* — avoidance of causing pain to any being — these constitute the Tapas (self-discipline) of the body.

anudvega-karaṃ vākyaṃ satyaṃ priya-hitaṃ ca yat |
svādhyāyābhyasanaṃ caiva vāṅmayaṃ tapa ucyate || 15 ||

15. Speech that does not cause distress and which is true, agreeable and beneficial, and also the recitation of the Vedas are called the verbal disciplines.

manaḥ prasādaḥ saumyatvaṃ maunam ātma vinigrahaḥ |
bhāva saṃśuddhir ityetat tapo mānasam ucyate || 16 ||

16. Peace of mind, benevolence, silence, self-restraint, perfect mindfulness — these are called mental disciplines.

Commentary

'Peace of mind' — the absence of anger, desire, delusion, pride, greed: 'benevolence' — being devoted to the good of others; silence — control of expression; 'self-restraint' — focusing one thought flow on the object of contemplation; 'perfect mindfulness' — the avoidance of reflecting upon subjects other than the Self — these constitute the self-discipline (Tapas) of the mind.

śraddhayā parayā taptaṃ tapas tat trividhaṃ naraiḥ |
aphalākāṅkṣibhir yuktaiḥ sātvikaṃ paricakṣate || 17 ||

17. This threefold self-discipline, practiced with firm conviction by those who desire no reward and are devoted — is called Sattvic self-discipline.

Commentary

'and are devoted' — that is, with the conviction that it is to be done as adoration of the Supreme Being.

satkāra māna pūjārthaṃ tapo dambhena caiva yat |
kriyate tad iha proktaṃ rājasaṃ calam adhruvam || 18 ||

18. Discipline, practiced with ostentation for the sake of gaining respect, praise and reverence, is considered to be Rajasic. It is unstable and transient.

mūḍha-grāheṇa ātmano yat pīḍayā kriyate tapaḥ |
parasyotsādanārthaṃ vā tat tāmasam udāhṛtam || 19 ||

19. That self-discipline which is practiced with foolish obstinacy by means of self-torture or in order to injure another is declared to be Tamasic.

The Three Kinds of Charity

dātavyam iti yad-dānaṃ dīyate'anupakāriṇe |
deśe kāle ca pātre ca tad-dānaṃ sātvikaṃ smṛtam || 20 ||

20. The charity that is dispensed from a sense of duty, to one who does not reciprocate, at the proper place and time to a deserving person — that is said to be Sattvic.

yattu pratyupakārārthaṃ phalam uddiśya vā punaḥ |
dīyate ca parikliṣṭaṃ tad-dānaṃ rājasaṃ smṛtam || 21 ||

21. But that which is given as a consideration for something received or in expectation of future reward, or grudgingly, is considered to be Rajasic

adeśakāle yad-dānam apātrebhyaśca dīyate |
asat-kṛtam avajñātaṃ tat-tāmasam udāhṛtam || 22 ||

22. That gift which is given at the wrong place and wrong time to unworthy recipients, without due respect and with derision, is considered to be Tamasic.

Commentary

So far, the classification based on Guna differences of yajñas, austerities and gifts as enjoined by the Vedas have been described. Now the definition of the same Vedic yajñas etc., is given according to their association with the Praṇava (the syllable AUM), and as signified by the terms Tat and Sat.

oṃ tat sad iti nirdeśo brahmaṇas trividhaḥ smṛtaḥ |
brāhmaṇas tena vedāśca yajñaśca vihitāḥ purā || 23 ||

23. "Aum Tat Sat" — this threefold expression designates Brahman. By this were the Knowers of brahman (Brāhmaṇas), the Vedas and yajñas ordained in the past.

Commentary

"Om That Truth" — denotes the Brahman. Here the term Brahman refers to the Veda. It is the secondary meaning of the term, and here alludes to the ritualistic portion of the Veda in which yajñas and similar rituals are prescribed. The mantra *"Om Tat Sat"* is used in these Vedic rites. The relevance of Om is that it should always be used at the commencement of the recitation of Vedic hymns. The syllables *Tat Sat* indicate that these rituals are worthy of esteem. The term Brāhmaṇas (knowers of the Vedas) covers the Vedas and the sacrificial rites ordained in them as well as the three social groups (Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas) who are entitled to Vedic study. All these were instituted by Krishna in the past.

tasmād om-ity-udāhṛtya yajña dāna tapaḥ kriyāḥ |
pravartante vidhān-oktāḥ satataṃ brahmavādinam || 24 ||

24. Therefore, all acts of worship, charity and self-discipline enjoined in the Vedas begun after the utterance of "Om" by the religious scholars.

Commentary

Religious Scholars (*brahmavādinaḥ*) — are those who [study] and expound the Veda; namely the three social groups — Brāhmanas, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas.

Thus the connection between the syllable Om and the Vedas and rituals enjoined in them has been established. The Vedas are associated with the syllable Om and the Brāhmanas — a term which here refers to all those belonging to the three social groups who [study] and memorise the Vedas and perform the rituals enjoined in them.

Now, Sri Krishna describes how these three (Vedas, rituals and performers) are linked with the word *Tat*: —

tad-ity-anabhisandhāya phalaṃ yajña-tapaḥ kriyāḥ |
dāna kriyāśca vividhāḥ kriyante mokṣa-kāṅkṣibhiḥ || 25 ||

25. Uttering "Tat" — without expectation of reward, those who seek Liberation perform acts of sacrifice, of self-discipline and of various kinds of charity.

Commentary

Whatever acts such as Scriptural study, yajña, self-discipline and charity are done without motivation for rewards by those seeking only final Liberation — these are designated by the term Tat referring to the Brahman (Ultimate Reality), since these

[acts] constitute the means for attaining Brahman. For it is well known that the term Tat signifies Brahman (Ultimate Reality), as in the following passage:

He is Sah, Vah. Kah, Kim, Yat, Tat, Padam, Anuttamam.' (M B . 13:254:93)

Thus, the study of the Vedas, sacrifices, self-discipline and philanthropy have been linked to the syllable Tat when they are used as the means of attaining Liberation.

sad-bhāve sādhu-bhāve ca sad-ity-etat prayujyate |
praśaste karmaṇi tathā sacchabdaḥ pārtha yujyate || *26* ||

26. The term "*Sat*" is used in the sense of existence and goodness, and so also, O Arjuna, the word "*Sat*" is to describe any action deserving of praise.

Commentary

The word *Sat* is used both in a metaphysical and mundane sense to express existence (*sad-bhava*) and harmony with the world (*sādhu-bhāva*). Similarly, in relation to any praiseworthy mundane work undertaken by someone, that is, a work which is done for the benefit of others, the word Sat is used to express this act.

yajñe tapasi dāne ca sthitiḥ sad-iti cocyate |
karma caiva tadarthīyaṃ sad-ityevābhidhīyate || *27* ||

27. Perseverance in sacrifice, self-discipline and charity is also called "*Sat*"; and so also any action for the sake of these is termed "*Sat*".

aśraddhayā hutaṃ dattaṃ tapas taptaṃ kṛtaṃ ca yat ||
asad ity-ucyate pārtha na ca tat pretya no iha || *28* ||

28. Whatever is offered or donated, whatever self-discipline is practiced and whatever action is performed without conviction — is called "*Asat*", O Arjuna. It is worthless here and in the hereafter.

Commentary

Offerings made in the fire, all self-discipline and philanthropy when performed without conviction, are Asat (ie. unreal, unbeneficial), even though they may have been enjoined by the Scriptures. Why so? Because they are worthless here and in the hereafter; — [without being purified by conviction] they are not conducive to Liberation nor to any significant mundane results.

hariḥ oṃ tatsat
iti śrīmad bhagavad gītāsūpaniṣatsu
brahma-vidyāyāṃ
yoga-śāstre śrī kṛṣṇārjuna saṃvāde
śraddhā-traya-vibhāga-yogo nāma
saptaḍaśo'dhyāya

Thus in the Upanishads of the Glorious Bhagavad Gita
The science of the Eternal, the Scripture of Yoga
The dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna
Ends the seventeenth discourse entitled
"The Three Division of Conviction"

Chapter 18

Mokṣa Sannyāsa Yogaḥ

Liberation Through Renunciation

Summary of the Teaching

In the preceding two chapters, the following points were made:— (a) Only actions such as sacrifices, austerities, philanthropy and other works prescribed by the Vedas lead to worldly prosperity and Liberation; nothing else (b) The general characteristic of all Vedic works is their connection with the Pranava (Om); (c) there is a distinction between the works that lead to Liberation and those that lead to mundane prosperity — designated respectively by the terms Tat and Sat.. (d) Liberation is achieved through spiritual practice and the other works done without the desire for personal gain; (e) — an enterprise made possible by the prevalence of Sattva. (f) The increase of Sattva is brought about by the adoption of a Sattvic diet.

Now, in this the 18th Chapter these concepts are further elucidated:—

(1) The similarity between *Tyāga* (relinquishment) and *Sannyāsa* (renunciation) which are described as the means to Liberation.

(2) The nature of *Tyāga*.

(3) Ascribing the agency of all actions to the Lord who is the Supreme Ruler.

(4) Sattva Guna is magnified by an elaborate description of the effects of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas.

(5) How the Supreme Being is attained through work done according to one's own station in life — done as worship of the Divine and

(6) Bhakti Yoga, the essential teaching of the whole of this Sacred Scripture.

arjuna uvāca

saṃnyāsasya mahābāho tattvam icchāmi veditum |
tyāgasya ca hṛṣīkeśa pṛthak keśiniṣūdanam || *1* ||

Arjuna said:
1. I desire to know the decisive truth about the difference between renunciation (*Sannyāsa*) and relinquishment (*Tyāga*) O Krishna.

Commentary

Both renunciation and relinquishment as means for Liberation are enjoined in the Scriptures. Arjuna wants to know whether *Tyāga* and *Sannyāsa* are synonymous or not. “Do these two terms *Sannyāsa* and *Tyāga* have different meanings or do they signify the same thing? If they signify different things, I want to know their characteristics. If they are synonymous, their identical nature should be explained”.

śrī bhagavān uvāca

kāmyānāṃ karmaṇāṃ nyāsaṃ saṃnyāsaṃ kavayo viduḥ |
sarva karma phala tyāgaṃ prāhus tyāgaṃ vicakṣaṇāḥ || 2 ||

The Blessed Lord said:
2. The enlightened ones understand that renunciation (*Sannyāsa*) means the giving up of all works which are motivated by desire. The wise declare relinquishment (*Tyāga*) to be the relinquishment of the fruits of all works.

Commentary

Some scholars understand that Sannyāsa is complete abandonment of acts done with a motive for rewards (*Kāmya Karma*), others opine that the meaning of the term Tyāga, used in reference to Liberation, means the relinquishment of the results not only of all desiderative acts (*Kāmya*), but also of obligatory (*Nitya*) and periodic (*Naimittika*) duties. Here the problem is, whether the relinquishment Tyāga taught in the Scriptures concerns only the desiderative acts themselves, or is inclusive of all works. Sri Krishna uses the terms Sannyāsa and Tyāga interchangeably — from this it is concluded that He considers the terms Tyāga and Sannyāsa as synonyms.

tyājyaṃ doṣavad ityeke karma prāhur manīṣiṇaḥ |
yajñā dāna tapaḥ karma na tyājyam iti cāpare || *3* ||

3. Some learned ones say that all actions should be given up as defective; others declare that works such as yajña, philanthropy and self-discipline should not be given up.

Commentary

Some learned ones — namely the followers of Kapila and those Vaidikas who agree with his opinions, contend that all works including sacrifices, philanthropy and self-discipline., should be renounced by those aspiring for Liberation, because they cause bondage in the same way that material aspirations tend to do. Others say that acts like sacrifices etc., should not be renounced.

niścayaṃ śṛṇu me tatra tyāge bharata sattama |
tyāgo hi puruṣa-vyāghra tri-vidhaḥ saṃprakīrtitaḥ || *4* ||

4. Listen to My verdict, O Arjuna (Tiger-among-men), regarding relinquishment (Tyāga) for relinquishment is declared to be of three kinds.

Commentary

The term ‘Tyāga’ has been used by Krishna in respect of actions prescribed by the Scriptures from three points of view:– (1) as referring to results, (2) as referring to the acts themselves and, (3) as referring to agency.

- The relinquishment of results consists in the conviction that 'Heaven and such other [beneficial] results arising from acts do not belong to Me.'
- Renunciation of acts is the complete rejection of the sense of possessiveness in regard to one's acts. This sense of possessiveness appears as a conviction that — 'I am undertaking these works because they are the means for achieving my own personal goals.'
- Renunciation of agency is correctly ascribing all instrumentality to the Supreme Lord of all.

yajñā dāna tapaḥ karma na tyājyaṃ kāryam eva tat |
yajño dānaṃ tapaścaiva pāvanāni manīṣiṇām || *5* ||

5. The acts of yajña, philanthropy and self-discipline should not be relinquished; but should be performed. For yajña, philanthropy and self-discipline are the purifiers of the wise.

Commentary

Why? Because these three practices performed consistently and perpetually until death are an aid to the erasure of previous Karmas which stand in the way of the fulfilment of one's spiritual development.

etānyapi tu karmāṇi saṅgaṃ tvyaktvā phalāni ca |
kartavyānīti me pārthas niścitaṃ matam uttamam || *6* ||

6. It is My considered and final opinion that even these [three] practices should be done, O Arjuna, relinquishing all attachment and the desire for reward.

Commentary

They should be performed regularly throughout life by one who desires Liberation, as an adjunct to spiritual practice, renouncing attachment, that is, the self-centred motivation regarding works and their results.

niyatasya tu saṃnyāsaḥ karmaṇo nopapadyate |
mohāt tasya parityāgas tāmasaḥ parikīrtitaḥ || *7* ||

7. But the renunciation (sannyāsa) of obligatory acts (nitya karma) is not proper. Relinquishment (Tyāga) of these through delusion is declared to be in the Mode of Tamas.

Commentary

The synonymity of these two terms Tyāga and sannyāsa is conclusively established by this verse. Obligatory acts (should not be rejected for without works even the sustenance of the body would be impossible, as already stated:—

'From inaction, not even the body can be sustained' (3.8).

Nitya karmas are those acts concerned with acts of daily living such as the Five Great Sacrifices (*Pañca Mahā Yajnas* — see footnote to Chap 3:8) in which offerings are made and the remnants consumed as a sacramental meal. Nurturing the body by eating the remnants of food offered to the Lord produces a positive mind-set according to the Vedas. Therefore enlightenment in the form of direct perception of Brahman, is dependent on the purity of diet. The relinquishment of these obligatory duties, which contribute to the development of wisdom, through the misconception that they perpetuate material bondage is a characteristic of the Mode of Ignorance.

duḥkham ityeva yat karma kāya kleśa-bhayāt tyajet |
sa kṛtvā rājasaṃ tyāgaṃ naiva tyāga phalaṃ labhet || *8* ||

8. One who renounces works as being bothersome from apprehension of physical hardship, acts in the Mode of Rajas and will not gain the merit of renunciation (Tyāga).

Commentary

Although works constitute an indirect means for Liberation, yet they produce frustration, since they involve collecting materials making a effort which is troublesome and cause physical stress through strenuous exertion. If, on account of such apprehension, one decides that the practice of meditation alone should be adopted for perfection in Yoga, and abandons rites like the Five Great Sacrifices — such renunciation is made in the Mode of Passion. Since this is not in accordance with the design of the Scriptures. In fact, works themselves do not directly purify the mind but only indirectly through channeling the grace of God.

kāryam ityeva yat karma niyataṃ kriyate'rjuna |
saṅgaṃ tyaktvā phalaṃ caiva sa tyāgaḥ sātviko mataḥ || 9 ||

9. When obligatory works are performed merely as duty, O Arjuna, renouncing attachment and also fruits, such relinquishment is regarded as Sattvic.

na dveṣṭy-akuśalaṃ karma kuśale nānuṣajjate |
tyāgī sattva samāviṣṭo medhāvī-cchinna saṃśayaḥ || 10 ||

10. The one who has renounced, being wise and imbued with Sattva, free from doubts neither hates disagreeable work nor clings to an agreeable one.

Commentary

One who is thus, filled with the Mode of Harmony and wise, ie., with the knowledge of reality as it is, and as a consequence of it, is free from all doubts.

Disagreeable work (*akuśalam karma*) are those which produce undesirable results; and agreeable acts *(kuśalam karma*) are those which bring about desirable results.

In respect of both these types of works there is neither resentment nor enthusiasm because of (a) the absence of the feeling of possession and (b) the forsaking of all goals other than the Ultimate Truth (Brahman) as well as (c) the rejection of the notion of agency.

na hi deha-bhṛtā śakyaṃ tyaktuṃ karmāṇy-aśeṣataḥ |
yastu karma-phala-tyāgī sa tyāgīty-abhidhīyate || 11 ||

11. For, it is impossible for an embodied being to abandon work entirely. But one who foregoes the rewards of works, is called a renunciate.

Commentary

It is impossible for one who has a body and has to maintain it, to abandon all actions; for eating, drinking etc., required for nourishing the body and other acts connected therewith are unavoidable. For the same reason the Five Great Sacrifices etc., are also indispensable.

Since the topic was commenced with the declaration:— 'For renunciation (Tyāga) is declared to be of three kinds' (18.4). The reference in this verse to renunciation of rewards is illustrative; — it implies also the renunciation of the idea of agency as well as attachment to the works themselves.

An objection may be raised to this statement thus:— "Sacrifices such as Agnihotra, the sacrifices of the full and new moon, the Jyotistoma etc., and also the Five Great Sacrifices are enjoined by the Shastras only because of their results like the attainment of heaven. Even the obligatory (nitya) and periodic (naimittika) ceremonies are enjoined because of their rewards, as implied in the following passage:— "the world of Prajāpati is obtained by the householders" (V.P., 1.6.37). Therefore, as all work is understood to be directed at specific results, it is inevitable that both agreeable and disagreeable results will accrue, even though the actions may be performed without any desire for rewards, just as a seed sown must grow into a tree and bear fruit. Hence, one who aspires for Liberation should relinquish all works, because the results are incompatible with Liberation." Sri Krishna answers such objections:—

aniṣṭam iṣṭaṃ miśraṃ ca trividhaṃ karmaṇaḥ phalam |
bhavaty-atyāgināṃ pretya na tu saṃnyāsināṃ kvacit || 12 ||

12. Undesirable, desirable and mixed — thus threefold is the result of work that accrues after death to those who have not renounced; but to those who have renounced, there is none whatsoever.

Commentary

The '*undesirable result'* is Purgatory [and other negative Karmic states], *'the desirable'* is heaven [and various positive Karmic states], *'the mixed'* is progeny, and other material benefits [such as cows, food etc.], which are also mixed with some undesirable results. Those who have not abandoned the idea of agency, possessiveness and desire for rewards — obtain these three types of consequences after death. The meaning of *'after death'* (*Pretya*) may also be understood as '*following the performance of actions'*. But to those who have relinquished the sense of agency etc., no such results, which are a hindrance to final Liberation are accrued.

The purport is this: — Sacrifices, charity and self-discipline, must certainly be performed throughout life and are necessary for achieving one's material goals; but in regard to Liberation from Samsāra their application is different. On the surface these practices appear to be the same in both cases (material gain and Liberation), but their end result differs according to the motive. Their application to the process of Liberation is indicated in such texts as —

> 'The Brahmins desire to know Him by the study of the Vedas, by sacrifices, by philanthropy, by self-discipline associated with fasting' (Br. Up., 4.4.22).

But here Sri Krishna enjoins the performance of work without the idea of agency or motive.

Sri Krishna now teaches how one can realise that one is not the agent, by attributing all agency to God, the Supreme Being and the Inner Ruler. By cultivating this attitude, one can attain freedom from possessiveness with regard to actions and their rewards. For it is the Supreme Being who performs all actions through the individual Selves who are His expressions. The organs, bodies and life-breaths (prāṇa) of all embodied beings are His vestures. The purpose of their existence is for His pleasure alone. Therefore, even the appeasement of hunger etc., and such other acts of daily living are all considered as the means for accomplishing the pleasure of the Supreme Lord Himself.

pañcaitāni mahābāho kāraṇāni nibodha me |
sāṅkhye kṛtānte proktāni siddhaye sarva karmaṇām || 13 ||

13. Learn from Me, O Arjuna, these five causes which that are considered in reasoned deliberation (Saṅkhya-krtānta) to be responsible for the accomplishment of all works.

Commentary

'*Saṅkhya'* here means the reasoning faculty. *'Saṅkhya-krtānta'* means those conclusions which are arrived at, after rational and intelligent deliberation in accordance with the Vedic teachings on the nature of the things as they really are. There are considered to be five factors which contribute to the actualisation all works.

adhiṣṭhānaṃ tathā kartā karaṇaṃ ca pṛthag vidham |
vividhāśca pṛthak-ceṣṭā daivaṃ caivātra pañcamam || 14 ||

14. The seat of action (the body) and likewise the agent, the various organs, the different and distinctive functions of Prāṇa (vital force) and also the presiding deity is the fifth among these.

śarīra vāṅg-manobhir yat karma prārabhate naraḥ |
nyāyyaṃ vā viparītaṃ vā pañcaite tasya hetavaḥ || *15* ||

15. For whatever work one undertakes by body, speech and mind, whether right or wrong, these five are its basis.

Commentary

These five factors are the basis of all actions performed by means of the body, mind or speech, whether they are authorised by the Shastras or not.

(1) The body, which is a combination of the 'five great elements' is known as the seat of action (*adhiṣṭhānam*), since it is governed by the individual Self.

(2) The 'doer' is the individual Jivātman. In the Vedanta-Sutras it is declared that the individual Self is the knower and the doer

(3) The various organs are the five motor organs; speech, hands, feet, reproductive system and alimentary system along with the mind. They are varied in accordance with their distinct functions in accomplishing actions.

(4) The unique and distinctive functions of Prāṇa (vital force) — here the expression 'functions' (*Ceṣṭa*) refers to all its several dynamics which sustain the body and senses through its divisions of Prāṇa, Apāṇa, Vyāna, Udāna and Samāna.

(5) the Presiding Deity (*daivam*) is the Supreme Self, the Inner Ruler, who is the main 'cause' in carrying out the action.

It has been already affirmed that:— 'I am seated in the hearts of all. From Me proceed memory, knowledge and their absence also' (15.15), and Sri Krishna will later say:— 'The Lord, O Arjuna, lives in the heart of every being causing them to revolve by His power as if mounted on a machine' (18.61). The agency of the individual Self is dependent on the Supreme Self as established in the aphorism:—

> 'But (the power of being the doer) is from the Supreme, because the Veda says so' (B.S., 2.3.40).

Now an objection may be raised in this way:— "If the agency of the individual Self is dependent on the Supreme Being then the Scriptures containing injunctions and prohibitions are worthless because the individual Self cannot be charged with moral responsibility". This objection is satisfactorily answered by the author of the Brahma-Sutras in the aphorism:—

> 'But He requires the individual Self to make an effort in order that the injunctions and prohibitions of Shastra should not be redundant' (B.S.2.3.41).

The general paradigm is this:— By means of the senses, body etc., provided by the Supreme Being, supported by Him and empowered by Him — the individual begins, of its own free will, the effort of directing the body, senses etc., in the performance of actions. The Jīva itself, of its own free will, is responsible for activity, since the Supreme Being, abiding within, impels it to act only in the sense of granting His permission. Just as projects such as moving heavy stones and trees are collectively the labour of many persons who are all equally responsible for the effect as a group, yet each one of them individually is also responsible for it by being subject to positive and negative commands (by the managing director).

tatraivaṃ sati kartāram ātmānaṃ kevalaṃ tu yaḥ |
paśyat yat kṛta buddhitvān na sa paśyati durmatiḥ || *16* ||

16. Now such being the case, the fool who sees only the Self as the agent on account of undeveloped intellect — does not see at all.

Commentary

In order to do anything the Jīvātman requires the consent of the Paramātman. Such being the case, if one regards the Jīvātman as the sole agent, due to an undeveloped intellect, one does not see reality as it actually is.

yasya nāhaṅkṛto bhāvo buddhir yasya na lipyate |
hatvāpi sa imāṃ-llokān na hanti na nibadhyate || *17* ||

17. He who is free from the egoistic notion and whose understanding is not tainted — though he slays all these men, he slays not, nor is he bound.

Commentary

He who is free from the egoistic notion of being the sole agent is therefore not tainted by self-conceit. He has arrived at the logical conclusion that — 'As I am not the agent of this work, its results are extraneous to me; so this work does not belong to me'— such a person, is not bound by this enterprise known as 'battle'. In other words he does not experience the karma of such actions.

jñānaṃ jñeyaṃ pari-jñātā trividhā karma codanā |
karaṇaṃ karma karteti trividhaḥ karma saṅgrahaḥ || *18* ||

18. Knowing, the knowable and the knower are the threefold stimulus to action. The instrument, the act and the agent are the threefold basis of action.

Commentary

'Knowing' means the knowledge about the work which ought to be performed. The *'knowable'* is the work which ought to be performed. *'The knower'* is the person who understands this work. The meaning is that in the [Vedic paradigm] the injunctions to do [ritual] acts, are a combination of these three. Among these three factors, action itself, which is the object of knowledge, is briefly described as being threefold — the instrument, action and the agent. The '*instrument'* consists of the materials and implements which are the means [of the ritual act]. The '*action'* consists of the [actual] sacrifice etc. The '*agent'* is the performer [of the sacrifice].

(This Vedic Paradigm is intended to be used as model for all acts — spiritual as well as mundane. Ed.)

jñānaṃ karma ca kartā ca tridhaiva guṇa-bhedataḥ |
procyate guṇa saṅkhyāne yathāvac-chṛṇu tāny-api || *19* ||

19. Knowledge, act and actor are declared, according to the Doctrine of the Gunas (Sankhya philosophy) to be of three kinds, according to the Modal Differences. Listen to a description of them as they really are.

The Threefold Division of Knowledge

sarva-bhūteṣu yenaikaṃ bhāvam avyayam īkṣate |
avibhaktaṃ vibhakteṣu taj-jñānaṃ viddhi sātvikam || *20* ||

20. That knowledge which reveals one immutable reality in all beings, and not as separate in the different bodies — know that knowledge to be Sattvic.

Commentary

The Self, which is of the form of consciousness, is alike and uniform, though distinct, in all beings, even though they may externally, and from the point of view of qualification and function, be distinguished into social classes, students, householders, fair, tall etc.

pṛthaktvena tu yaj-jñānaṃ nānā bhāvān pṛthag-vidhān |
vetti sarveṣu bhūteṣu taj-jñānaṃ viddhi rājasam || 21 ||

21. But that knowledge which sees various and distinctive (spiritual) entities in all the separate (physical) beings — know that knowledge to be Rajasic.

yat tu kṛtsnavad ekasmin kārye saktam ahaitukam |
atattvārthavad alpaṃ ca tat tāmasam udāhṛtam || 22 ||

22. But that which adheres to one single act as if it were the whole, which is not founded on reason, and which is untrue and trivial — that knowledge is declared to be Tamasic.

Commentary

But that understanding which clings to a single type of act as a bounden duty — such as the worship of disembodied spirits or elementals yielding very small rewards — as if it granted all desires; that work which is not based on any sound reason — in other words, because of attachment, since it is not fully productive and is 'untrue' because it is based on a false view of things — such as seeing differentiation in the nature of the Atman; 'trivial' because the practice yields poor results.

The Threefold Division of Acts

niyataṃ saṅga rahitam arāga-dveṣataḥ kṛtam |
aphala prepsunā karma tat tat sātvikam ucyate || 23 ||

23. That obligatory work which is done without attachment, without desire or aversion, by one who desires no reward is said to be Sattvic

Commentary

'Obligatory work' are those activities which are appropriate to one's own profession and stage of life (varṇa-āśrama). Doing it *'without attachment'* means being free from the idea of agency or personal involvement, and *'without desire or aversion'* means that it is not done through either a desire to win approval or to avoid calumny — that is, performed without ostentation.

yat tu kāmepsunā karma sāhaṅkāreṇa vā punaḥ |
kriyate bahulāyāsaṃ tad rājasam-udāhṛtam || 24 ||

24. But that act which is performed with great effort by one who longs to gratify desires and prompted by self-interest; is said to be Rajasic.

Commentary

Here *vā* (or) is used in the sense of *ca* (and) — in other words, whatever work is performed by one who possesses the misconception that whatever enormous effort this act demands, it is performed entirely by oneself.

anubandhaṃ kṣayaṃ hiṃsām anavekṣya ca pauruṣam |
mohād ārabhyate karma yat tat tāmasam ucyate || 25 ||

25. That task which is undertaken through delusion, disregarding the consequences, loss, injury and one's own capacity is said to be Tamasic

Commentary

'Consequence' refers to the [personal] suffering which follows from an action performed. *'Loss'* means financial loss involved in doing that action. *'Injury'* is suffering caused to other living beings during the execution of the action. *'Personal capacity'* is the ability to complete the task. Whenever an enterprise is undertaken without considering these aspects and from delusion ie., unmindful of the actual agency of the Divine — that act is said to be in the Mode of Ignorance.

The Threefold Division of Agents

mukta saṅgo'nahaṃvādī dhṛty-utsāha-samanvitaḥ |
siddhy-asiddhyor nirvikāraḥ kartā sātvika ucyate || 26 ||

26. An agent who is free from attachment, and self-acclaim, who is endowed with perseverance and enthusiasm and is unaffected by success and failure, is said to be Sattvic.

Commentary

Free from self-acclaim (*an-ahamvādi*) means one does not have the feeling of being the agent. Perseverance is the attribute of enduring until the completion, any suffering that is collateral in the work undertaken.

rāgī karma phala prepsur-lubdho hiṃsātmako'śuciḥ |
harṣa śokānvitaḥ kartā rājasaḥ parikīrtitaḥ || 27 ||

27. That agent is known as Rajasic who is swayed by desire and motivated by gain, stingy, cruel, impure and overwhelmed by delight and grief.

Commentary

Cruel — one who hurts others who have been engaged to do the work; *impure* — lacks the [mental & physical] purity required for the act; overwhelmed by delight and *grief* — is elated or depressed by success or failure in victory or defeat, in a battle.

ayuktaḥ prākṛtaḥ stabdhaḥ śaṭho naiṣkṛtiko'lasaḥ |
viṣādī dīrgha-sūtrī ca kartā tāmasa ucyate || 28 ||

28. That agent who is unqualified, vulgar, obstinate, unscrupulous, dishonest, lazy, morose and a procrastinator is said to be Tamasic

Commentary

Unqualified (*Ayukta*) — is unfit for works enjoined by the Shastras, and is engaged in forbidden activities; *vulgar* (*prākṛtaḥ*) — uneducated; *stubborn* (*stabdhaḥ*) — not disposed to work; *unscrupulous* (*ṣaṭaḥ*) — inclined to do nefarious deeds; *dishonest* (*naiṣkṛtikaḥ*) — treacherous; *lazy* (*ālasaḥ*) — not inclined to carry out even work that is undertaken; *morose* (*viṣādī*) — given to excessive moodiness; and a *procrastinator* (*dīrgha-sūtrī*) — a person who, while engaged in nefarious activities, spends a lot of time thinking about harming others.

The Threefold Division of Rationalism (Buddhi) and Fortitude (Dhṛti)

These [intellectual] faculties contribute to understanding the definitive conclusions about the facts of reality (tattvas) and the purpose of human life (puruṣārthas).

buddher bhedaṃ dhṛteścaiva guṇatas trividhaṃ śṛṇu |
procyamānam aśeṣeṇa pṛthaktvena dhanañjaya || *29* ||

29. Hear now, the threefold division of *Buddhi* (rationalism) and *Dhṛti* (fortitude), according to the Gunas, O Arjuna, as I declare them completely and distinctly.

Commentary

'Buddhi' is the reasoned conclusion reached through [intellectual] analysis. *'Dhrti'* is the resolution to persevere in whatever task has been undertaken even against all odds.

pravṛtiṃ ca nivṛttiṃ ca kāryākārye bhayābhaye |
bandhaṃ mokṣaṃ ca yā vetti buddhiḥ sā pārtha sātvakī || *30* ||

30. That Rationalism is considered to be Sattvic O Arjuna, which discerns extroversion and introversion, what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, fear and freedom from fear, bondage and liberation.

Commentary

Extroversion (*pravṛtti*) — the Dharma which is practiced as the means for worldly prosperity. *Introversion* (*nivṛtti*) — the Dharma which is practiced as the means for *Liberation* (*Mokṣa*). A pure intellect understands that transgression of the teachings of Dharma is the cause of fear and the following of the teachings is the cause of fearlessness. It reveals the causes of bondage and Liberation — the true nature of Samsāra and deliverance from it.

yayā dharmam adharmaṃ ca kāryaṃ cākāryam eva ca |
ayathāvat prajānāti buddhiḥ sā pārtha rājasī || *31* ||

31. The Rationalism which produces a mistaken conception of Dharma and Adharma and also of what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, O Arjuna, is Rajasic.

Commentary

'What ought to be done, and what ought not to be done' — in accordance with place, time and circumstances.

adharmaṃ dharmam iti yā manyate tamasāvṛtā |
sarvārthān viparītāṃśca buddhiḥ sā pārtha tāmasī || *32* ||

32. That Rationalism, O Arjuna, which, enveloped in darkness, regards Adharma as Dharma and which reverses every value, is Tamasic.

dhṛtyā yayā dhārayate manaḥ prāṇendriya kriyāḥ |
yogenāvyabhicāriṇyā dhṛtiḥ sā pārtha sātvikī || *33* ||

33. That perseverance by which one, through steady application, maintains the consistent functioning of the mind and metabolism and the work of these sense-organs — that perseverance is of the nature of Sattva.

Commentary

The meaning is that the perseverance in the Mode of Goodness entails persistence in contemplation and other acts of spiritual practice (which includes physical well-being) until the attainment of the goal.

yayā tu dharma kāmārthān dhṛtyā dhārayate'rjuna |
prasaṅgena phalākāṅkṣī dhṛtiḥ sā pārtha rājasī || 34 ||

34. That perseverance, O Arjuna, by which, on account of attachment and desire for rewards, one adheres to [the pursuit of] Dharma, Kāma and Artha is Rajasic.

Commentary

These are the three Puruṣārthas or Goals of Human Endeavour which are Dharma — duty/right action, Kāma — recreational activities, and Artha — economical advancement. One who is dedicated to their pursuit is in the Mode of Passion.

yayā svapnaṃ bhayaṃ śokaṃ viṣādaṃ madam eva ca |
na vimuñcati durmedhā dhṛtiḥ sā pārtha tāmasī || 35 ||

35. That perseverance by which a foolish person does not give up sleep, fear, grief, depression and passion, O Arjuna, is of the nature of Tamas.

Commentary

A fool persists in sleep, and the inebriation of passion produced by the enjoyment of sense objects. The terms fear, grief and depression refer to those things which cause feelings of fear, grief and depression. That clinging by which one maintains the thought processes and actions which lead to these, is of the nature of Ignorance.

The Threefold Division of Happiness

sukhaṃ tvidānīṃ trividhaṃ śṛṇu me bharatarṣabha |
abhyāsād ramate yatra duḥkhāntaṃ ca nigacchati || 36 ||

36. Now hear from Me, O Arjuna, the threefold division of happiness, in which one enjoys by continued practice and by which one is surely freed from suffering;

Commentary

True happiness is that incomparable joy which a person, through continued [spiritual] practice over a long period of time, gradually attains, and [after attaining which,] is never again engulfed by the suffering of Samsāra.

yat tad agre viṣam iva pariṇāme'mṛtopamam |
tat sukhaṃ sātvikaṃ proktam ātma buddhi prasādajam || 37 ||

37. That joy which is like poison at first but eventually becomes like ambrosia, arising from the serene state of the mind focusing on the Atman — such joy is said to be Sattvic.

Commentary

At the commencement of the spiritual practice (Yoga), because of the great effort required [to practice] and because the disengaging of the Self from Material nature does not occur naturally, one experiences great suffering. But in the end, after perseverance in the practice, when the essential nature of the Self, as truly detached from Prakrti, is

realised then there is ecstatic joy. This joy is achieved through the cultivation of mental tranquillity produced by meditation upon the Self.

viṣayendriya saṃyogād yat tad agre'mṛtopamam |
pariṇāme viṣam iva tat sukhaṃ rājasaṃ smṛtam || 38 ||

38. That pleasure which arises from contact of the sense organs with their objects, which at first is like ambrosia but in the end like poison — that is declared to be Rajasic.

Commentary

When one engages in sense gratification, the joy that is engendered at first is delectable, but becomes like poison causing hell-like misery once satiation has been achieved or once one is incapable of further enjoyment due to over-indulgence. This pleasure is said to be in the Mode of Rajas.

yad agre cānubandhe ca sukhaṃ mohanam ātmanaḥ |
nidrālasya pramādotthaṃ tat tāmasam udāhṛtam || 39 ||

39. That pleasure which is characterised by self-delusion both in the beginning and the sequel, arising from sleep, indolence and negligence is declared to be Tamasic.

Commentary

Here 'delusion' means the absence of knowledge about things as they really are. 'Sloth' is lethargy in the activities of the senses. When sensory perceptions are slow, retardation results. 'Negligence' is neglect of one's duty. From this too, one's learning becomes obstructed. In this manner these two (sloth & negligence) cause delusion.

na tad asti pṛthivyāṃ vā divi deveṣu vā punaḥ |
sattvaṃ prakṛtair muktaṃ yad ebhiḥ syāt tribhir guṇaiḥ || 40 ||

40. There is no being on earth or even among the gods in heaven, that is free from [the influence] these three Gunas arising from Prakrti.

The Fourfold Division of Vocations

Now Sri Krishna, proceeds to teach about the vocations of the various social classes — the Brāhmaṇas (Intellectuals), Kṣatriyas (administrators), Vaiśyas (entreupreneurs) and Śūdras (workers) based upon their previous Karmas; all of which He classifies according to the Gunas. He declares that all such activities when performed in the spirit of renunciation and as acts of worship are a means to final Liberation which is the attainment of the Supreme Being.

brāhmaṇa kṣatriya viśāṃ śūdrāṇāṃ ca paraṅtapa |
karmāṇi pravibhaktāni svabhāva prabhavair guṇaiḥ || 41 ||

41. The duties of the Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas; Vaishyas and the Śūdras O Arjuna, are distinctly divided according to their inherent dispositions.

Commentary

The character of Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaishyas, and Śūdras arise from their various inherent dispositions. In other words their past Karma is the cause of their being born in a specific social group. The dominant Guna [in one's character] is the result of such Karma. The Sattva-guna becomes dominant in the character of the Brāhmaṇa through

the suppression of the qualities of Rajas and Tamas. In the Kṣatriya the dominant quality is Rajas through the suppression of Sattva and Tamas. The Tamo-guna becomes the inherent nature of the Vaishya, becoming slightly dominant by suppressing Sattva and Rajas. While in the Śūdra the Tamo Guna is much more dominant.

Obligations and duties are assigned to them by the Scriptures according to their inherent dispositions. For the Shastras assume that the Brāhmaṇas and the others possess particular attributes and accordingly suggest their duties and occupations.

śamo damas tapaḥ śaucaṃ kṣāntir ārjavam eva ca |
jñānaṃ vijñānam āstikyaṃ brahmam-karma svabhāvajam || 42 ||

42. Serenity and restraint, self-discipline, purity, forbearance, integrity, wisdom, insight and faith in the Vedas — all these constitute the functions of the Brāhmaṇas based on their inherent disposition

Commentary

Serenity is the control of the external sense-organs, *restraint* is the control of the mind, *self-discipline* is the regulating of enjoyments as enjoined by the Shastras. *Purity* is maintaining fitness for the performance of rituals as enjoined by the Shastras. *Forbearance* is the retaining of mental composure even while being injured by others. *Integrity* is straight-forwardness, that is, dealing with others according to what one actually feels. *Wisdom* is the correct understanding of the nature of the higher and lower truths. *Insight* is the understanding of the notable and unique attributes of the Supreme Reality. *Faith in the Vedas* (*āstikyam*) is the firm conviction in the truth of everything enjoined in the Vedas; in other words, a conviction that cannot be unsettled for any reason whatever. A firm conviction that —

(1) The Lord Vasudeva, the Supreme Being, is signified by the term Para-Brahman.

(2) He is devoid of even the slightest trace of negativity,

(3) He possesses an inestimable abundance of auspicious and excellent attributes such as omniscience, power etc., boundless and essential to Him.

(4) The sole purpose of the whole of the Vedas and the Vedanta is to reveal Him.

(5) He is the sole cause of the universe

(6) He is the ground (substratum) of the entire universe.

(7) He is the essential actuator of all.

(8) All actions [secular and religious] enjoined in the Vedas are to be done as sacred acts.

(9) When propitiated in this manner the Lord confers the results of the practice of Dharma (Right living), Artha (Financial advancement), Kama (Pleasure) and Moksha (Liberation). All of which have already been taught in the Gita.

śauryaṃ tejo dhṛtir dākṣyaṃ yuddhe cāpyapalāyanam |
dānam īśvara-bhāvaśca kṣātraṃ karma svabhāvajam || 43 ||

43. Valor, power, determination, proficiency and courage in battle, generosity and leadership are the inherent characteristics of the Kṣatriyas.

Commentary

Valor is the ability to engage in combat without fear. *Power* is the capacity to remain undefeated by others. *Determination* is the capacity to carry to completion any undertaking that has been started, despite obstacles. *Proficiency* is skill in the executing of all tasks. *Courage* is not retreating in a battle even when faced with certain death.

Generosity is the ability to give away one's own possessions even in their entirety. *Leadership* is the capacity to govern well.

kṛṣi go-rakṣya vāṇijyaṃ vaiśya-karma svabhāvajam |
paricaryātmakaṃ karma śūdrasyāpi svabhāvajam || 44 ||

44. Agriculture, cattle-breeding and trade are the innate vocations of Vaiśyas, and the duty of the Śūdras is service, arising from their innate dispositions.

Commentary

All these have been described to stress that the professions of the four social groups are supplementary to the performance of sacrifices and other rituals which are ordained by the Shastra. Sacrifices etc., are the prerogative of the first three social groups.

Because the Brāhmaṇas [presumably] posses a preponderance of Sattva, the control of the senses, mind etc., [should] come easily and naturally to them and have thus been prescribed as their Dharma (duty). Control of the mind, senses etc., have not been recommended as the duties of Kṣatriyas and the Vaiśyas since this can only be achieved with great difficulty owing to the respective preponderance of Rajas and Tamas in them. The vocation of a Brāhmaṇa is officiating as a priest in sacrifices, teaching the Vedas and receiving gratuity. The vocation of a Kṣatriya is public administration and protection, and that of the Vaiśyas is farming etc., as mentioned before. The duty and vocation of the Śūdra is service under the direction of the other three orders.

sve sve karmaṇy-abhirataḥ saṃsiddhiṃ labhate naraḥ |
svakarma nirataḥ siddhiṃ yathā vindati tacchṛṇu || 45 ||

45. Through dedication to one's own duties, one attains perfection. How dedication to one's own duty achieves perfection listen now:—

Commentary

Perfection is the supreme state of ultimate beatitude.

yataḥ pravṛttir bhūtānāṃ yena sarvam idaṃ tatam |
svakarmaṇā tam abhyarcya siddhiṃ vindati mānavaḥ || 46 ||

46. By worshipping the One from whom all beings have evolved and by whom all this is pervaded — through the performance of one's own vocational Dharma — perfection is attained.

Commentary

It has been mentioned before that everything in the Universe originates from Krishna and the entire cosmos is pervaded by Him.

śreyān svadharmo viguṇaḥ para-dharmāt svanuṣṭhitāt |
svabhāva niyataṃ karma kurvan-nāpnoti kilbiṣam || 47 ||

47. Better is one's own Dharma, even when imperfectly done, than the Dharma of another well-performed. When one practices the Dharma ordained by one's own nature, one incurs no fault.

Commentary

One's own Dharma is that practice which is suitable for one to undertake according to one's natural disposition (*svabhāva*), and takes the form of Divine Service, relinquishing the idea of agency etc., as has been taught previously. The *Dharma* [referred to here] known as *Karma Yoga*, consists in physical and mental activity and is thus easy to

perform by one engrossed in Material Nature (Prakrti). Thus, Karma Yoga, even if it is defective in some respects, is better than the *Dharma of another*, that is — *Jñāna-yoga*, a practice that is suitable for one capable of controlling the senses. This practice is difficult and prone to failure, and may only occasionally be well performed.

Thus Sri Krishna reminds us here about the teaching of the third chapter — [that Karma Yoga is superior to Jñāna Yoga.]

sahajaṃ karma kaunteya sadoṣam api na tyajet |
sarvārambhā hi doṣeṇa dhūmenāgnir ivāvṛtāḥ || *48* ||

48. One should not relinquish one's natural vocational skills [Karma] O Arjuna, though they may be imperfect; for, all undertakings are enveloped by imperfection like fire by smoke.

Commentary

The meaning is that even though one may be capable of practicing Jñāna Yoga, one should rather perform Karma Yoga only. All undertakings, whether of Karma or Jñāna, are indeed accompanied by a certain degree of imperfection, that is, involve painful effort, as fire is attended by smoke. But still there is this difference:— Karma Yoga is easy and free from the liability to misadventure, but Jñāna Yoga is the exact opposite to this.

asakta buddhiḥ sarvatra jitātmā vigata spṛhaḥ |
naiṣkarmya siddhiṃ paramāṃ sanyāsenādhigacchati || *49* ||

49. One who is completely unattached, who is self-controlled and is free from desires — attains by renunciation the supreme perfection of liberation from all activity.

Commentary

The gist is that one attains steadfastness in mindfulness (Dhyāna Yoga) which is the consummation of even Jñāna Yoga. Dhyāna Yoga which is going to be described hereafter consists in the complete cessation of sensory activity.

siddhiṃ prāpto yathā brahma tathāpnoti nibodha me |
samāsenaiva kaunteya niṣṭhā jñānasya yā parā || *50* ||

50. Learn from me in brief, O Arjuna, how one who has achieved perfection, attains Brahman (Self-realisation), which is the supreme consummation of wisdom.

Commentary

'One who has achieved perfection', is one who has attained perfect mindfulness through Karma Yoga practiced consistently on a daily basis throughout life. In other words; "I shall teach you briefly by what mode of living, one can attain Brahman (Self-realisation) — the supreme goal of wisdom". The meaning is that Self-realisation is the supreme consummation, the ultimate perfection of insight gained through mindfulness.

buddhyā viśuddhayā yukto dhṛtyātmānaṃ niyamya ca |
śabdādīn viṣayāṃs-tyaktvā rāga-dveṣau vyudasya ca || *51* ||

51. Endowed with a purified intellect, subduing the mind by steadfastness, relinquishing sound and other objects of the senses and abandoning attraction and aversion;

Commentary

'Endowed with a purified intellect' — means endowed with the intellect (*Buddhi*) focusing on the Self as it really is. *'Subduing the mind by steadfastness'* — means preparing the mind for meditation by practicing the gradually withdrawal from external objects. *'Relinquishing sound and other objects of senses'* — means not paying attention to them, and *'abandoning attraction and aversion'* associated with engagement with objects of the senses.

vivikta-sevī laghvāśī yata-vāk-kāya-mānasaḥ |
dhyāna yoga paro nityaṃ vairāgyaṃ samupāśritaḥ || *52* ||

52. Resorting to solitude, eating moderately, restraining speech, body and mind, perpetually engaged in the Yoga of meditation and practicing dispassion;

Commentary

'Resorting to solitude' means living in a secluded place free from hindrances to meditation; *'eating moderately'* means eating neither too much nor too little; *'restraining speech, body and mind'* means directing the functions of the body, speech and mind to meditation; *'perpetually engaged in the Yoga of meditation'* means daily practicing meditation until death; *'exercising dispassion'* means developing non-attachment to everything except the one object of contemplation [the Self] through reflection on the imperfections of all objects [of enjoyment].

ahaṅkāraṃ balaṃ darpaṃ kāmaṃ krodhaṃ parigraham |
vimucya nirmamaḥ śānto brahma-bhūyāya kalpate || *53* ||

53. Forsaking self-affirmative ideation, power play, arrogance, desire, anger and property, free from the notion of possessiveness and tranquil — one becomes worthy of the state of Brahman.

Commentary

'Forsaking self-affirmative ideation (*ahaṅkāra*)' means abandoning the concept that the body is the Self; diminishing the force of previous Vāsanas (mental impression and habitual patterns) which nourish self-affirmative ideation.

brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā na śocati na kāṅkṣati |
samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu mad-bhaktiṃ labhate parām || *54* ||

54. Having realised the state of Brahman, full of joy, neither grieving nor craving, being the same to all beings, one attains supreme devotion to Me.

Commentary

'Having realised the state of Brahman', means having realised the essential nature of the Self as consisting of unlimited knowledge and naturally completely dependent and subservient to Krishna. *'Full of joy'* means not affected by various forms of suffering (kleṣas) that arise from Karma and other causes, and does not grieve for any being other than [separation from] Krishna, nor desires anything other than Him. *'The same to all beings'* means that one becomes equally indifferent to all beings other than Krishna and regards them as worthless as straw and thus attains supreme devotion to Him. *'Supreme devotion'* is a realisation which makes one love Krishna ardently — an experience of Krishna as the Lord of all, who creates, sustains and dissolves the universe in cosmic play, who is the Lotus-eyed Lord of Sri; and the personal Lord of the individual Self.

bhaktyā mām abhijānāti yāvān yaścāsmi tattvataḥ ǀ
tato māṃ tattvato jñātvā viśate tad anantaram ǀǀ *55* ǀǀ

55. By [such] devotion, one realises Me and knows who I am in reality — Knowing Me thus in truth, through devotion one thereafter enters into Me.

Commentary

"Through such devotion, one comes to understand My essential nature and My attributes and sovereign glory. After obtaining this realisation of the Ultimate Truth through loving devotion, one then enters into Me — attains unification with Me".

The meaning is that one attains Krishna by means of ardent Bhakti which develops after the direct vision of the divine nature, attributes and glory of the Lord as they really are. The term 'through devotion' indicates the Bhakti which is the cause of unification; as stated in the text;—

'But by exclusive devotion it is possible to truly know, see and enter into Me' (11.54).

Thus the culmination of the sequence which started from the performance of obligatory (*nitya*) and periodic (*naimittika*) duties without desire for rewards, but performed as service to the Supreme Being has been described. Sri Krishna now explains that even actions directed at attaining material benefit (*Kāmya-karmas*) culminate in the same attainment as those described above, provided they too are done as service to the Divine.

sarva karmāṇyapi sadā kurvāṇo mad vyapāśrayaḥ ǀ
mat prasādād avāpnoti śāśvataṃ padam avyayam ǀǀ *56* ǀǀ

56. Constantly engaged in all works, taking refuge in Me, through My grace, one attains the eternal and immutable state.

Commentary

Not only obligatory and periodic duties but all works, even those meant for material gain (desiderative acts or Kāmya Karmas) when done by *'taking refuge in Me'* — that is, transferring to Krishna the ideas of agency and proprietorship, one attains, by His Grace, the eternal realm which is unchanging or perfect. *'Pada'* (realm) indicates the goal which is attained; ie. Krishna Himself.

cetasā sarva karmāṇi mayi saṃnyasya mat paraḥ ǀ
buddhi-yogam upāśritya mac-cittaḥ satataṃ bhava ǀǀ *57* ǀǀ

57. Mentally dedicating all works to Me, thinking of Me as the Supreme Goal, and resorting to the Yoga of Discrimination (Buddhi-Yoga), focus your mind on Me.

mac-cittaḥ sarva durgāṇi mat-prasādāt tariṣyasi ǀ
atha cettvam ahaṅkārān na śrosyasi vinaṅkṣyasi ǀǀ *58* ǀǀ

58. Focusing your mind on Me, you shall, by My grace, surmount all obstacles. If, however, out of self-conceit, you do not heed Me, you shall be ruined.

yad ahaṅkāram āśritya na yotsya iti manyase ǀ
mithyaiṣa vyavasāyaste prakṛtis-tvāṃ niyokṣyati ǀǀ *59* ǀǀ

59. If out of self-conceit, you think; 'I will not fight,' your resolve is futile — Nature will compel you.

Commentary

'self-conceit' means under a false sense of independence, and thinking that you know what is good for you and what is not.

svabhāvajane kaunteya nibaddhaḥ svena karmaṇā |
kartuṃ necchasi yan mohāt kariṣyasy-avaśo'pi tat || 60 ||

60. O Arjuna (Kaunteya), bound by your own Karma inborn in your own nature, having no self-control, you will be compelled to do that very thing which, through delusion, you now desire not to do.

īśvaraḥ sarva bhūtānāṃ hṛddeśe'rjuna tiṣṭhati |
bhrāmayan sarva-bhūtāni yantrārūḍhāni māyayā || 61 ||

61. The Lord abides in the heart of every being, O Arjuna, spinning them round and round, by His power, as if they were mounted on a machine.

Commentary

Lord Vasudeva, who is the ruler over all, abides in the mind of every being, from which arises all knowledge which leads to all types of activities — both worldly and spiritual. The machine is the body and senses also called Prakrti;— it is activated by Krishna in accordance with the Modes of Material Nature (Maya). This has already been mentioned in the verses:—

'And I am seated in the hearts of all. From Me are memory, knowledge and their absence also' (15.15)

'From Me everything proceeds' (10.8).

The Vedas also proclaim the same :—

'He who, dwelling in the Self.........................' (Br. Up. Madh: 3.7.22).

Sri Krishna now explains the way to become liberated from Maya:—

tam-eva śaraṇaṃ gaccha sarva-bhāvena bhārata |
tat prasādāt parāṃ śāntiṃ sthānaṃ prāpsyasi śāśvatam || 62 ||

62. Take refuge in Him alone, O Arjuna (Bharata), with your whole being. By His grace, you shall obtain supreme-peace and the eternal abode.

Commentary

Take refuge with all your might (*Sarva bhāvena*), that is surrender mentally and emotionally to Sri Krishna, the ruler of all and you will attain supreme peace here and the eternal abode hereafter.

iti te jñānam ākhyātaṃ guhyād guhyataraṃ mayā |
vimṛśyaitad aśeṣeṇa yathecchasi tathā kuru || 63 ||

63. Thus I have taught you that knowledge which is the greatest of all mysteries. Reflecting on it thoroughly, do what you will.

sarva guhyatamaṃ bhūyaḥ śṛṇu me paramaṃ vacaḥ |
iṣṭo'si me dṛṣam iti tato vakṣyāmi te hitam || 64 ||

64. Hear again My supreme teaching, the most secret of all; as you are exceedingly dear to Me, I will declare what is good for you.

manmanā bhava mad-bhakto mad yājī māṃ namas kuru |
mām evaiṣyasi satyaṃ te pratijāne priyo'si me || *65* ||

65. Focus your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, worship Me, prostrate before Me and you shall come to Me alone. I promise you this verily, for you are dear to Me.

Commentary

'Focus your mind on Me' enjoins the cultivation of mindfulness (*Vedana*), which is expressed more explicitly by the terms *'meditation'* (*Dhyāna*) and *'worship'* (*Upāsana*) — which is proclaimed in Vedanta texts. This meditation culminates in direct perception (*Darsana*) which is continuous mindfulness [of Krishna] full of ardent love.

'Be devoted to Me' — means practice continual mindfulness of Me who am exceedingly dear to you as you are incomparably dear to Me. *'Worship Me'* (*madyāji*) — is a further application of being My devotee. Yajña here refers to worship in general and the desire to worship (*ārādhana*) follows the [realisation of] complete subservience to the Lord.

"Following these instructions you shall come to Me. I make this solemn promise to you. Do not take it as being mere rhetoric, for you are dear to Me". One who loves Krishna ardently, it also intensely loved by Krishna, and consequently, not being able to bear the mutual separation, Krishna Himself will make every effort to assure a reunion.

sarva dharmān parityajya mām ekaṃ śaraṇaṃ vraja |
ahaṃ tvā sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ || *66* ||

66. Completely relinquishing all Dharmas, take refuge in Me alone. I will release you from all sins, grieve not.

Commentary

'Relinquishing all Dharmas' — means the complete abandonment of the notion of agency, proprietorship, results etc., in the practice of Karma, Jñāna and Bhakti Yogas which are the means (dharmas) for attaining the highest good when done as Divine Service.

'I will release you from all sins' — means that I will free you from all obstacles that prevent you from attaining Me; consisting of [the karmic reaction of] innumerable acts of doing what is forbidden and neglecting what is bidden. Accumulating from beginingless times [the reactions of] these deeds cause obstacles in spiritual development.

An alternative interpretation is this:— Bhakti Yoga is possible only for those individuals who love the Lord intensely and who are free from all negative karma. One's karmic reactions (sins) are obstacles in the path of developing loving devotion and are so numerous that the expiatory rites which would exculpate them could not possibly be performed in the limited time of one life span. Arjuna therefore thought that he was incapable of practicing Bhakti Yoga. To remedy Arjuna's despondency the Lord said: 'Completely relinquishing all Dharmas, take refuge in Me alone.' The term 'Dharma' used in this context would apply to the expiatory rites. So in order to successfully commence Bhakti Yoga, surrender to Me alone. I am supremely compassionate, the refuge of all without distinction, an ocean of maternal solicitude for those dependent on Me. I will release you from all sins, which have been explained as obstacles to the practice of Bhakti Yoga — grieve not.

idaṃ te nātapaskāya nābhaktāya kadācana |
na cāśuśrūṣave vācyaṃ na ca māṃ yo'bhyasūyasi || *67* ||

67. This teaching you should never reveal to one who is devoid of self-discipline and devotion, nor to one who has no desire to listen, nor certainly to one who traduces Me.

Commentary

This most secret doctrine should not be revealed by you to anyone who has not practiced some form of self-discipline. Neither should this be taught to one who is not devoted to Me or to you as the teacher. The meaning is that you should not reveal this teaching to one who, though practicing self-discipline, is not a devotee and does not serve Me. It should also never be taught to one who, though a devotee, has no desire to listen. Nor should it be imparted to one who vilifies Me, that is, when My divine nature, glories and attributes are described — discovers defects in them. The grammatical differences of case (from ablative to nominative form) indicates that the last one mentioned is the most despicable character.

ya imaṃ paraṃ guhyaṃ mad bhakteṣv-abhidhāsyati |
bhaktiṃ mayi parāṃ kṛtvā māṃ evaiṣyaty-asaṃśayaḥ || *68* ||

68. One, who possessed of supreme devotion to Me, expounds this highest mystery to my devotees, shall come to Me, there is no doubt about this.

na ca tasmān manuṣyeṣu kaścin me priya-kṛttamaḥ |
bhavitā na ca me tasmād anyaḥ priyataro bhuvi || *69* ||

69. Nor is there among human beings anyone who does more precious service to Me. Nor shall there be another on earth dearer to Me than he.

Commentary

The first reference — to those who are unworthy to hear the teachings of Gita, is meant to stress that teaching it to them is more displeasing to the Lord than not teaching those who are worthy.

adhyeṣyete ca ya imaṃ dharmyaṃ saṃvādam āvayoḥ |
jñāna-yajñena tenāham iṣṭaḥ syām iti me matiḥ || *70* ||

70. And whoever studies this dialogue of ours about Dharma, worships Me through the sacrifice of knowledge (Jñāna-yajña); such is My conviction.

śraddhāvān anasūyaśca śṛṇuyād api yo naraḥ |
so'pi muktaḥ śubhāṃllokān prāpnuyāt puṇya karmaṇām || *71* ||

71. And the one who listens to it with faith and free from envy, shall also be liberated and will attain the auspicious realms of those who have performed meritorious deeds

Commentary

One who has faith and is free from malice, hearing the Gita when taught [by a qualified teacher], shall, by such hearing, be delivered from all obstacles which hinder taking to devotional life; reaching the auspicious realms (śubha Lokas), ie, the realms of the hosts of devotees who have done virtuous acts.

kaccid etacchātaṃ pārtha tvyaikāgreṇa cetasā |
kaccid ajñāna saṃmohaḥ pranaṣṭaste dhanañjaya || *72* ||

72. Have you paid attention to this, O Arjuna (Partha), with a concentrated mind? Has your delusion, caused by ignorance been dispelled O Dhananjaya?

arjuna uvāca

naṣṭo mohaḥ smṛtir labdhā tvat prasādān mayācyuta |
sthito'smi gata sandehaḥ kariṣye vacanaṃ tava || 73 ||

Arjuna said:
73. Destroyed is my delusion and I have, by Your grace, O Krishna, gained insight (Smrti). Freed from doubts, I stand steadfast, I will act according to Your word.

Commentary

Delusion or misapprehension here means (a) the misconception that the Atman is the Prakrti (body-mind complex) which is actually the non-self; (b) the lack of understanding that all sentient and insentient entities, constitute the 'vesture' of the Divine who is their antarātman (inner-self). (c) The notion that works, both obligatory (nitya-karma) and periodic (naimittika-karma), cause bondage when in fact they are a means for attaining the Supreme Being — when done as service to Him. All such misapprehension is now destroyed.

The summary of Arjuna's insight into the teaching is —

Self-realisation is the understanding that the Jivātman is the knower and thus different from Prakrti [that which is known as an object] and is essentially free from the Modes of Material Nature. The Jivātman is essentially subservient and completely dependant upon the Supreme Person and is ruled by Him.

The true knowledge of the Supreme Being is the understanding that He is designated by the expression 'Para-Brahman' and He is a vast ocean of all auspicious, excellent attributes such as knowledge, strength, glory, valour, creativity, radiance etc., which are unbounded and intrinsic to Him. His essential nature consists solely of goodness. He is the absolute antithesis of all that is evil. The origination, sustentation and dissolution of the entire universe are His sport.

Sri Krishna is Vasudeva, the Supreme Being, known from the Vedanta and reached only by service (*upāsana*), in the form of Bhakti.

Bhakti can be attained by the control of the senses and the mind, rejecting prohibited acts and performing obligatory works (nitya-karma) and periodic works (naimittika-karma) purely as Divine Service (kainkaryam). Bhakti is to be developed day after day through the regular practice of discrimination between the higher and lower truths.

sañjaya uvāca

ity-ahaṃ vāsudevasya pārthasya ca mahātmanaḥ |
saṃvādam imam aśrauṣam adbhutaṃ roma-harṣaṇam || 74 ||

Sanjaya said:
74. Thus have I heard this astounding dialogue between Vasudeva and the great-minded Arjuna, which makes my hair stand on end.

vyāsa prasādāc-chātvān etad guhyam aham param |
yogaṃ yogeśvarāt kṛṣṇāt sākṣāt kathayataḥ svayam || 75 ||

75. By the grace of Vyasa have I heard this supreme mystery of Yoga as declared personally by Krishna, the Lord of Yoga.

Commentary

By the grace of Vyāsa ie., by the benefit of the psychic power of clairaudience, granted by him, I have been able to hear this supreme mystical doctrine called Yoga from Sri Krishna Himself!

rājan saṃsmṛtya saṃsmṛtya saṃvādam imam adbhutam |
keśavārjunayoḥ puṇyaṃ hṛṣyāmi ca muhurmuhuḥ || 76 ||

76. O King, constantly remembering this astounding and auspicious dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, I rejoice again and again.

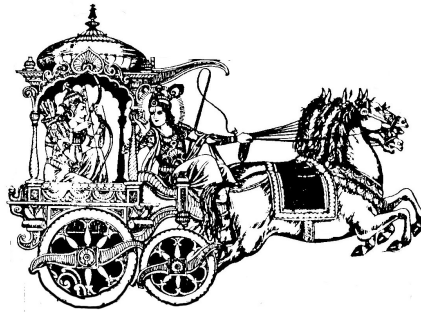
tacca saṃsmṛtya saṃsmṛtya rūpam aty-adbhutaṃ hareḥ |
vismayo me mahān rājan hṛṣyāmi ca punaḥ punaḥ || 77 ||

77. And constantly recalling that most spectacular form of Hari, great is my amazement, O King, and I rejoice again and again.

yatra yogeśvaraḥ kṛṣṇo yatra pārtho dhanurdharaḥ |
tatra śrīrvijayo bhūtir dhruvā nītir matir mama || 78 ||

78. Wherever Sri Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, and Arjuna the archer are, there abide forever prosperity, victory, wealth and righteous statesmanship — this is my firm conviction.

hariḥ oṃ tatsat
iti śrīmad bhagavad gītāsūpaniṣatsu
brahma-vidyāyāṃ
yogaśāstre śrīkṛṣṇārjuna saṃvāde mokṣa-sanyāsa-yogo nāma
aṣṭādaśo'dhyāyaḥ

Thus in the Upanishads of the Glorious Bhagavad Gita
The science of the Eternal, the Scripture of Yoga
The dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna
Ends the eighteenth discourse entitled
"Liberation Through Renunciation"

APPENDIX # 1

Esoteric Interpretation of the Names mentioned in the First Chapter (*Paramahamsa Yogananda*)

Pāṇḍavas

Yuyudhāna — śraddha — devotion
Yudham caitany prakāśayitum eṣaṇaḥ abhilaṣamān iti |
The one who has an ardent desire to fight to express spiritual consciousness.

Uttamaujas — vīrya — Vital celibacy
Uttama oja yasya sa iti | One whose power is supreme.

Cekitāna — smriti — spiritual awareness
Ciketi jānāti iti | He who remembers, realises; one whose perception is clear.

Viraṭa — samādhi — enstacy
Viśeṣeṇa ātmani rājate iti | One who is wholly immersed in the inner Self.

Kāśirāja— prajna — insight
Pādarthān kāśuyān prakāśayan rājate vibhāti iti |
One whose illumination causes other things to be illuminated or revealed accurately.

Drupada — tivra samvega — extreme dispassion or ardent desire for liberation
Drutam padam yasya iti | One whose steps are quick or swift

Dhriṣṭaketu — yama — self—restraint (*Dhriṣ* = courageous, ketu = chief)
Jana-ketavaḥ āḍādaḥ dhṛṣyate anena iti |
One by whose discriminative intellect difficulties are overcome.

Śaibya — niyama — observances (*śī* — in whom all things lie)
śivam maṅgalam tat-sambandhiyam iti maṅgala-dāyakam |
One who adheres to that which is auspicious — to what is conducive to one's welfare.

Kuntibhoja — āsana — right posture (*Bhuj* — to take possession of, or to rule.)
Yama kuntim kunā ātmantraṇā daiva vibhūtī ākarṣikā śaktim bhunakti pālayate yaḥ saḥ
He who takes possession of and supports the spiritual force — Kunti — by which divine powers are invoked and drawn into oneself.

Yudha-manyu — prāṇāyama — Control of life force
Yudham caitanya prakāśaytum eva manu kriyā yasya saḥ |
One whose chief action is to fight to manifest divine consciousness

Purujit — pratyahāra — mental interiorization
Paurān indriya adhiṣṭhātṛi devān jayati iti ।
One who has conquered the fortress of the astral powers ruling the senses.

Abhimanyu — samyama — pratyahāra and dhyāna — self mastery
Abhi sarvatra manute prakāśate iti ।
One who shines intensely everywhere

Yudhiṣṭhira – viveka — discriminative awareness
Bhīma – prāṇāyāma — control of prāṇā
Arjuna — dhṛti, samyama — power of patience and self control
Sahadeva – yama — the power to observe the negative rules of morality
Nakula – niyama — the power to observe the positive rules

Kauravas

Duryodhana — material desires — (*dur* — difficult, *yodhana* — to overcome)

Droṇa — vipāka — *samskāra* or mental impressions. (*dru* — to melt)
Karmaṇām dravībhāvanām vipākaḥ iti ।
The fruition of actions that are dormant

Kripa — avidya — delusion (derived from *klṛp* — to imagine)
Vastuni anyatvāni kalpayati iti । He who sees things not as they are.

Bhīṣma — asmita – sense of self — (root *bhiṣ* — to frighten)
Yasmāt pañca-tattvāni vibhāti saḥ ।
That by which the five elements come into being or shine.

Karṇa — rāga — attachment (root *kri* — to do)
Karaṇa śīla iti । One who acts according to habitual tendencies to derive pleasure.

Vikarṇa — dveśa — repulsion
Akaraṇa śīla iti । One who behaves according to his habitual tendencies in avoiding pain.

Jayadratha — abhiniveśa — body bound identification
Rāmitvā anurakto bhūtvā jayati utkṛṣṭa rūpeṇa tiṣṭhati iti ।
One who conquers by deep attachment to life — deep attachment to one's continued embodied existence

Bhuriśravas (Son of Somadatta) — Karma — Material action (*bhūri* — repeated *śravas* — flow or stream)
Bhūri bahulam śravaḥ kṣaraṇam yaḥ saḥ iti ।
That flow which frequently and repeatedly disappears.

Aśvathāman — āśaya — latent desires. (root *ās—va* — to store up, *stha* — to remain)
āsnuvan sañcayan tiṣṭhati iti । That which remains stored up or preserved.

APPENDIX # 2

Rāmānuja's Polemics

1. A Refutation of the Advaita (Monist) Doctrine of Unreality

Chap 2:12

na tvevāhaṃ jātu nāsaṃ na tvaṃ neme janādhipāḥ |
na caiva na bhaviṣyāmaḥ sarve vayamataḥ param || *12* ||

There never was a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor any of these temporal kings. Nor will there be any time in future when all of us shall cease to be.

As regards the doctrine of Bhaskara [and the Advaitins] that the above mentioned distinctions [between the Lord and jīvas, and between the jīvas themselves] are unreal and due to some limiting condition (Māyā) — it would be highly improper [for the Lord] to make reference to distinctions at the time of imparting the [ultimate] Truth.

If we examine [Bhaskara's] theory of upādhi (adventitious limitation), which states that the apparent differences among jīvas are due only to the bodies (adventitious limitations), it must be admitted that discussion of differences is out of place when explaining the ultimate Truth, because according to the theory [of Bhaskara and the Advaitins] there are no such differences in reality.

The inherent differences mentioned by the Lord are taught by the Veda also:—

> 'Eternal among eternals, the intelligent among the intelligent, the one among many who fulfils desires' (Sve. Up. 6:13, Ka. Up. 2:2:13).

The meaning of this text is: — 'Among the eternal sentient beings who are countless, He, who is the Supreme Spirit fulfils the desires of all.'

As regards the doctrine of the Advaitins that the perception of difference arises from ignorance (ajñāna or avidya) only, and is not actually real; [it may be pointed out that] the Supreme Being — whose comprehension must be perfect, free from all ignorance and its effects —must therefore have a direct cognition of the true nature of the ātman; comprised of eternal consciousness, and being without any differentiation and unchangeable. He therefore cannot possibly be aware of the so-called differences which arise from ignorance. It is, therefore, unimaginable that He would then engage Himself in activities such as teaching which are based entirely upon such a perception of differences arising from ignorance.

It may be argued that the Supreme Being, though perfectly aware of non-duality, can still be aware of such difference which persists even after sublation. For example a burnt piece of cloth may continue to look like a cloth, and that such continued [perception] of the nullified does not cause Him bondage. Such a proposition is invalidated in the light of another analogy of a similar kind, namely, the perception of the mirage. When a mirage is realised to be what it is, one does not then persist in an attempt to fetch water there from. In the same way, even if the impression of difference persists after it has been nullified by the realisation of non-dualism, it cannot impel one to activities such as teaching; for the person to whom the instruction is to be imparted is discovered to be unreal. The idea is that just as the discovery of the non-existence of water in a mirage brings an end to all efforts to get water from it, so also when all duality is negated by enlightenment, no activity like teaching disciples etc., could take place.

Nor is it acceptable that the Supreme Lord was at one time ignorant and obtained knowledge of non-duality through the Scriptures, and is still being subject to the continuation of the suppressed experiences. Such a contention contradicts the Veda (Śruti) and the Smrti (Canon Law): —

> 'He, who is all-knowing and all wise' (Mun.Up., 1.1.9);
> His supreme power is indeed revealed as varied and inherent, and consists of omniscience, omnipotence and action' (Sve. Up. 6.8);
> 'I know, Arjuna, all beings of the past, present and future but no one knows Me,' etc. (Gita 7:26).

And again, if the perception of difference and distinction are said to persist even after the non-dual Self has been decisively realised, the question arises— to whom will the Lord and the succession of teachers of the tradition (Guru Parampara) impart the knowledge in accordance with their realisation? The question requires an answer. The realisation of non-duality cannot possibly co-exist with the perception of differences.

If the Advaitins reply using the *Bimba-Pratibimba* (the original and the reflection) argument that teachers give instructions to their own reflections in the form of disciples such as Arjuna, it is absurd. For, no sane person would attempt to give instructions to his own reflection seen in precious stone, the blade of a sword or a mirror, knowing, as he does, that they are non-different from himself! The theory of the persistence of the sublated is thus impossible to maintain, because the knowledge of the non-dual Self is supposed to destroy the very ignorance in which differences external to the Self are alleged based.

'The persistence of the sublated' does indeed occur in cases where the cause is the result of some physical defect such as the seeing of two moons, in impaired eyesight known as double-vision (diplopia). This double vision cannot be nullified by the right understanding that there is only one moon. Even though the perception of the two moons may continue, it is rendered inconsequential on the strength of strong contrary evidence. For, it will not lead to any activity based upon a real experience.

But in the present context [in the case of Sri Krishna teaching Arjuna], the concept of difference — where both object and cause are admittedly unreal — is negated by the knowledge of reality. So the 'persistence of the sublated' is impossible.

Thus, if the Supreme Lord and the succession of preceptors (guru-parampara) have attained the realisation of [a non-dual] reality, their perception of duality [after realisation] and activities such as teaching proceeding from such [non-dual] realisation, are impossible. If, on the other hand, the perception of difference persists because of the continuation of ignorance and its causes, then these teachers are themselves ignorant of the Truth, and they will be incapable of teaching the Truth.

Moreover, as the preceptor has attained the realisation of the non-dual ātman and thereby overcome the ignorance obscuring Brahman and all the effects of such ignorance, there is no purpose in instructing the disciple. If it be argued that the preceptor and his teaching are just in the imagination of the disciple, the disciple and his knowledge are similarly the product of the imagination of the preceptor, and as such the ignorance in question cannot be overcome. If it is maintained that the disciple's knowledge, even though imaginary, overcomes ignorance etc., because it annuls the previous state of non-enlightenment, the same can be asserted of the preceptor's knowledge. The futility of such teachings is obvious. Enough of these unsound doctrines which have all thus been refuted!

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2. *Refutation of the Advaita Doctrine that Avatāras are Unreal.*

Chapter 4:6

Ramanuja states in his introduction to the **Commentary** that he supports the absolute reality of the Avatāras. He now goes to some lengths to refute the doctrine of the Advaitins that the Incarnations of the Lord are not real but are only illusions — Ed.

The [real] character of Sri Krishna's own Nature is established from the following Scriptural texts: —
'He who is of sun-like colour, beyond darkness (Tamas)' (Sve. Up., 3.8)

'He who abides beyond Rajas (active matter)' (Taitt. Sam 2:2:12:5; 17:1:4:2);

'This Golden Person who is within the sun' (Cha. Up. 1:6:6);

' Within the heart, there is the Person consisting of mind, immortal and golden' (Taitt. Up. 1.6.1);

'All mortal creatures have come from the self-luminous Person' (Yaj., 32.2);

'Whose form is light, whose will is truth, who is the Self of ethereal space, who contains all actions. contains all desires. contains all odours, contains all tastes' (Cha. Up., 3.14.2);

'Like a raiment of golden colour' (Br. Up., 4.3.6).

Ātma-Māyāyā means 'by my own Māyā'. Here the term Māyā is a synonym for wisdom as stated in the lexicon (nirukta 3;9) of Yaska:— 'Māyā is wisdom, knowledge'.

Further there is the usage of authorities:—

'Through Māyā, He knows the good and bad of his creatures.'

The phrase 'by My own knowledge' means 'by My will', in other words — "without compromising My essential attributes as the Lord of the Universe, such as being immaculate, having auspicious attributes etc., I incarnate by creating a form similar to the configuration of gods, humans etc., ".

The Veda teaches the same thing:—

'He who is not subjected to birth, is manifest in various forms' (Taitt. Arany, 3.12.7).

The meaning is that His birth is quite unlike that of ordinary beings. The dissimilarity consists in His 'choosing' to be born — unlike ordinary beings whose birth is necessitated by their karma.

Thus construed, there is no contradiction either between the earlier teaching and what is taught later in the statements:— Many births of Mine have passed, O Arjuna and similarly yours also. I know them all' (4.5); 'I incarnate Myself' (4. 7); and 'He who thus knows in truth your birth and pastimes' (4.9).

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3. *Refutation of the doctrine of Identity of the ātman with Brahman*

Chapter 7: 19

bahūnāṃ janmanām ante jñānavān māṃ prapadyate |
vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti sa mahātmā sudurlabhaḥ || *19* ||

> At the end of many births, the enlightened one takes refuge in Me, realising that 'Vasudeva is everything'— It is very hard to find such a great-person.

Vasudeva alone is the highest goal and also the means for attaining it is the only possible meaning of the statement — *"Vasudeva is all",* because the topic started with the statements:— *"For I am very dear to the wise"* (7.17) and *"being fully integrated, [he] is devoted exclusively to Me as the highest goal."* (7.18). This conclusion is validated also because that enlightened one described here, possesses the same qualities as the wise one described earlier.

It has already been taught that the two Natures (*Prakṛti-Puruṣa*) — the sentient and the insentient, have their raison d'etre in being the dependants (*śeṣa*) of the Supreme Being in the two verses (4 & 5) beginning with "Earth, water, fire, air, ..." and ending with ."........ But, O mighty-armed One, know that My Superior Nature is different. It is the life-principle [Jīva-bhuta], by which this universe is sustained."

Then take the section beginning with — "Therefore, I am the origin and, dissolution of the whole universe. There is nothing higher than Myself, O Arjuna" (7:6-7), and ending with— " Know that all those states of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas have their origin in Me alone. But I am not in them; they are in Me. " (7.12).

It has been declared in these texts that the two Natures (Prakṛti-Puruṣa), both in their states of cause and effect, depend upon Krishna for their essence, existence and activities and that the Supreme Being Krishna is superior to everything in all respects. Therefore the one who knows this truth alone can be called an enlightened one or one realising that — "All this is Vasudeva."

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4. The Doctrine of The Path of Light or The Teaching on the Five Fires

Chapter 8:23 — 27

Now, Sri Krishna gives the teaching of the 'Path of Light', described in the Vedas (Chāṇḍogya Upanishad) which is applicable to both those who are Self-realised (jñanis) and to those who are devoted to the Supreme Being (bhaktas). The nature of this path is described as one of 'non-return to Samsāra'. One who traverses the 'Path of Light', is described thus in the Chāṇḍogya Upanishad 5.10.1: —

> 'So those who know it (the essential nature of the Self) thus, (as taught in the Doctrine of the Five Fires), and those too (ascetics) who dwell in the forest, worshiping with faith and practicing meditation go to (the deity ruling over) the rays of light, and from there to the Ruler of the day'.

For those who follow the Path of Light, the attainment of the Supreme Brahman and the non-return to birth are assured by the text;—

> 'Then there is a being, non-human, who leads them to Brahman, this is the path of the gods, the way to Brahman. Those who arrive by this path do not return to the human condition'. Chan. Up., 4.15.5

'Those who know it thus etc.' is a Vedic formula defining the goal; it does not refer to the attainment of Self-realisation which is only a component of the Science-of-Brahman as taught by Prajāpati in the beginning. It is taught in the Vidya (meditation) of Five Fires:

> 'Thus, indeed, in the fifth oblation the waters become human. This foetus having laid inside for ten or nine months or more or less, is then born'. (Chan. Up., 5.9.1)

and

> 'Those with a balance of positive Karmas.......and those with a balance of negative Karmas'. (Ibid., 5.10.7).

In this statement [in the fifth oblation the waters become human] the term 'waters' refers to the state of existence as humans and other beings, which is generated by Karma. Water being the primary representative of the other elements of the body (ie., the body-mind complex). The Jīvātman is only ever conjoined with them, and not assimilated into them. The difference between the sentient Self and insentient body is thus set out.

Then, by the texts,

> 'Those who know this' (Ibid., 5.10.1),
> 'Those who go to the rays of light' (Ibid.), and
> 'they who proceed by it return not to the human condition here', (4;15;6)

it is taught that those who know this distinction concerning the intelligent (Self) and non-intelligent (mind/body/world) — the former to be realised and the latter to be relinquished — they journey along the path of light and do not return to Samsāra.

The passage:— 'He leads them to the Brahman' (Ibid., 4.15.5), indicates that the Brahman is attained by both the Self-realised (jñāni) as well as the devotees (bhaktas) and also because of the maxim of Tat-kratu-nyaya — what is obtained through worship should be in accordance with the worship — therefore the Self, freed from material trammels should be constantly meditated upon as having its sole joy in absolute subservience to the Supreme Brahman who is Over-Self of the Self. (Brhad Aranyaka Up. 3;7;22 & Shatapatha. Brahmana; 14.6.5.5.30).

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5. A Polemic Against the Advaita interpretation of 13:2

(A Summary of the Śrībhāṣya)

Some [the followers of Advaita, Bhāskara and the Bhedābheda school of Advaita taught by Yādavaprakāśa] claim that the sentence — 'And know Me as the Knower' should be understood as expressing absolute identity between the individual Self (jīva-atma) and the Supreme Self (parama-atma). Thus, according to their view, the Lord (Ishvara), who is Existence-knowledge-Bliss Absolute must somehow have become the individual Self, as it were, through nescience (ajñana or ignorance). According to their doctrines the teaching of identity given here is intended to remove that nescience. When one is confronted with a rope which is mistaken for a snake, one becomes terrified, but, if a reliable person declares:— 'This is a rope, and not a snake'! the ignorance (the cause of fear) is removed. Thus, this teaching of the Lord, who is the most reliable person, [allegedly] removes the erroneous notion of the individual Self (Kshetrajña) being different from Him.

Such commentators should be questioned in the following manner:—

'Is this Teacher — Sri Krishna, the Supreme Ruler, one who has dispelled nescience through the direct personal perception of the absolute unity of the ātman or is He not?

If He has indeed realised complete identity with all the Selves, then the perception of duality like Himself being the teacher and Arjuna the pupil, and the act of teaching, become meaningless, because [according to them] it would be impossible [for an enlightened person] to superimpose a

false idea [of difference] on the ātman which is in reality pure undifferentiated Consciousness.

If, however, one argues that Krishna's ignorance has not been removed on account of His lack of Self-realisation, then, because He is ignorant, it is utterly impossible for Him to teach the Science of Self-realisation. Elsewhere it has been stated:— 'The wise, who have realised the truth, will instruct you in knowledge' (4.34). Thus, arguments of this nature must be rejected as coming from ignorant men who are intent upon misleading people in order to establish their [false] views which are contradicted by all Vedas, Smrtis, Itihasas, Puranas, logic and even their own words!

Relationship between Selves, Matter and the Supreme Being

This is the truth — some of the Vedic texts declare that insentient matter, the sentient being (the individual Self) and the Supreme Brahman are different in nature from one another — their relationship is described as being the object of enjoyment, the enjoyer (subject) and the Supreme Ruler, for example —

- 'From Primordial Nature (Prakrti), the Possessor of Māyā (the Lord) projects this world, in which another (the individual Self) is confined by Māyā (The Power of Cosmic Delusion). Sve. Up. 4.9.
- 'Realise then that Māyā is Prakrti and the Possessor of Māyā the Great Lord' ((Sve. Up. 4-10);
- 'The Material Nature — Prakrti is perishable; the immortal and imperishable is Hara (the individual Self); and the Lord alone rules over both the perishable Prakrti and the imperishable individual Self' (Sve. Up., 1.10).

Here, in the expression, The immortal and the imperishable is *Hara*, the enjoyer (ie., individual Self) is called *Hara* (one who seizes) because it grasps matter as an object of its own enjoyment.

Furthermore:—

- 'He is the cause, the Lord of the [individual Self who is the] lord of senses. He has no progenitor and no superior' (Sve. Up. 6.9)
- 'He is the ruler of Prakrti, of the individual Self, and is the regulator of the Gunas' (Ibid., 6.16);
- 'He is the Lord of the Universe, the Ruler of individual Selves, the eternal, the auspicious and the unchanging' (Ma. Na. Up. 11:3).
- 'The two unborn—the knowing Lord and the unknowing individual Self, the sovereign and the subject' (Sve. Up. 1.9);
- 'The Constant among things inconstant, the Intelligent among the things intelligent, the one who grants the desires of the many' (Ibid, 6.13. & Kath. Up. 5.13).
- 'When one knows the enjoyer, the object of enjoyment and Impeller...' (Sve.Up. 1.12).
- 'Regarding the individual Self and the Impeller to be different, and blessed by Him, It attains immortality' (Ibid. 1.6)
- 'Of these two, the one partakes of the sweet Pippala fruit, the other radiates in his splendour without partaking at all (Ibid., 4.6 and Mun. Up. 3.1.1).

Further: —

'There is one unborn female, red, white and black, who produces many creatures like herself; there is another unborn being who loves her and is close to her; there is yet another male unborn who after having enjoyed her, gives her up (Mun. Up. 4.5).

'The cow (ie. Prakrti) that has no beginning or end is the mother and source of all beings. (Chulika.Up 5)

'On the self-same tree, the individual Self sits sunken in grief, and being ignorant and powerless, it grieves. When it sees the other, the gracious Lord and His Glory it attains freedom from grief (Sve. Up. 4.7)

The following passages of the Gita also stress the same point:—

'This Prakrti, thus; divided eightfold, composed of Ahamkara etc., is Mine. 'This is My lower Prakrti Know My higher Prakrti to be distinct from this—the Life Principle, by which the universe is sustained (7.4-5.);

'All beings, O Arjuna, enter into My Nature at the end of a cycle. These I send forth again at the beginning of a cycle. Resorting to Prakrti, which is My own, I send forth again and again all this multitude of beings, helpless under the sway of Prakrti' (9.7-8);

> 'Under my control, Prakrti gives birth to all that moves, and that which does not move. And because of this, O Arjuna, does the world spin' (9.10)
>
> 'Know that Prakrti and the individual Self are without beginning' (13.19)
>
> 'The Great Brahman (or Prakrti) is My matrix; in that I lay the germ; from it, O Arjuna, is the birth of all beings' (14.3).

The meaning of this last verse is that the 'Great Brahman', which is the matrix of this world, is called Prakrti and it is an insentient thing consisting of elements in a subtle state — in it, the Lord lays the germ called the sentient jīva. From that, namely, from the merging of spirit and matter, willed by Him, are generated all these beings beginning with the gods and ending with the immobile things combined with the insentient matter.

The Supreme Being and His "Corporeality".

In the Vedas also, the subtle latent state of material elements is signified by the term 'Brahman':—

> 'From Him proceed the undifferentiated creation (Brahman) as also the world of matter and spirit (Anna) having name and form' (Mun. Up. 1.1.9).

Similarly several other Vedic Texts declare that the Supreme Being is the Self of all, and the conscious and non-conscious entities are inseparable from Him; because all entities, which exist as subjects of experience and the objects experienced, abiding in all states, make up the Divine 'corporeality' — consequently they are under His control. These Texts are as follows: —

> 'He who, dwelling in the earth, is within the earth, whom the earth does not know, whose body the earth is, who is the Inner Ruler of the earth' .... 'He who, dwelling in the Self, is within the Self, whom the Self does not know, whose body the Self is and who is the Inner Controller of the Self' (Br. Up. Madh., 3:7:3-22).
>
> 'He who is moving within the earth, to whom the earth is the body, whom the earth does not know.......... He who is moving within the Mrtyu (Nature), to whom Mrtyu is the body, whom Mrtyu does not know..... He is the Inner Self of all beings, sinless; He is the divine Lord, He is the one Nārāyaṇa' (Sub. Up., 7:1).

Here the term *Mrtyu* (or death) denotes the subtle state of unconsciousness which is expressed by the term *Tamas*, (inertia) because in the same Upanishad, it is declared:—

> 'The unmanifest (Avyakta) merges into the imperishable (Akshara) and the Akshara merges into Tamas (Ibid., 2).

Elsewhere it is stated thus: —

> 'He, entering within, is the Ruler of all creatures and is the Self of all . (Tait. Arany. 3:21).

Therefore, the Supreme Being by having the sentient and insentient entities, existing in all states, as His physical manifestations, owns them as His modes, and thus appears in the form of the universe, both as its cause and its effect. So, with the purpose of stressing this point some Scriptural verses indicate an identity between the Lord and the universe both as cause and effect. They begin with;—

> 'This Existence (Sat) alone, my dear, was in the beginning, one only without a second... It thought, "May I become many, may I multiply". It creates energy.' (Chan. Up., 6:2.:1:3),

and end with,

> 'All creatures here, my dear, have their root in the Sat (Being), have their abidance in the Sat, have Sat as their support. All this has That [Brahman] for its self. That [Brahman] is Existence. That [Brahman] is the Self. You are That, O Svetaketu' (Chan. Up., 6:8:4:6—7).

The following passages are further testimony: —

> 'He desired, "May I expand into the many"; He performed self-discipline; having performed self-discipline, He created all this,' .... 'He became both the Satya (individual Self) and Anrta (matter), He has remained true to His nature' (Tait. Up., 2:6:1).

The difference in nature between sentient and insentient entities on one hand and the Supreme Person on the other, established elsewhere in Scripture is also affirmed here: —

> 'Lo! Entering into these three divinities (ie. the energy, water and earth) in the form of ātman (individual Self), which is Myself, I evolve the differentiation of name and form' (Chan. Up., 6.3.2)

and also in the text,

> 'Having created it, He entered into it. Having entered it, He became Sat and Tyat......... He became both conscious and non-conscious, both the Satya (individual self) and Anrta (matter). He has remained true to His own nature' (Tait. Up., 2:6:1).

It is in this way that all the distinctions of names and forms are brought about.

The Veda also declares:—

> 'Then, this was undifferentiated. Now, it has become differentiated by names and forms' (Br.Up., 1.4.7).

Cause and Effect

Therefore, That which exists in the states of effect and cause, and which physically manifests as the sentient and insentient entities in their gross and subtle states is the Supreme Being. Because an effect is merely a modification of the cause, the effect becomes known when the cause is known. When the One becomes known, everything is known — this teaching of the Vedas is plausible and appropriate. In the passage:—

> 'Entering into these three divinities by way of the living Jīvātman (individual Self) which is My self, I evolve the differentiation of name and form' (Chan. Up., 6.3.2)

— the expression, 'the three divinities', represent all insentient matter and then, when the individual Selves with Krishna as their Overself, enter into insentient matter, the differentiation of names and forms arises. Thus, the teaching that all significant words used for things in their state of effect ultimately refer only to the Highest Self which is their cause is quite reasonable and appropriate.

Since the material cause of the cosmos is a composite factor comprised of Jīvas, Prakrti and Ishvara, it is perfectly tenable nevertheless that there is no actual intermingling of their respective natures. For example, the material cause of a multi-coloured cloth is a combination of white, black and red threads, yet the appearance of a single colour in the cloth is to be found only in the place where a particular coloured thread is concentrated — in the finished product, all the colours remain separate but together give the cloth its form and pattern. Similarly, although the cosmos has a combination of three factors — Iśvara, Jīvas and Prakrti for its material cause, still, in its state of effect, there is no commingling of the respective qualities of experiencer (subject = jīvātman), the experienced (object = material nature) and the Controller (Iśvara). Though the cotton threads can exist separately, they are sometimes intentionally woven together by someone and in consequence acquire the character of cause and effect. But in the case of cosmogony, there is a peculiarity in the fact that all entities — both Jīvas and Prakriti, in their two states of cause and effect derive their existential being only through being 'modes' (expressions) of the Supreme Person — by forming His 'corporeality'. The existence of distinctions in nature and the fact that there is no admixture of natural properties thus applies both here [in the creation of universe] as well as there [in weaving of the patterned cloth].

Such being the case, although the Supreme Brahman enters into the effect, He does so without

undergoing any change in His own essential nature — the immutability [of the Supreme Brahman] is well established. It is also appropriate to consider Brahman as the effect, because He is the inner sustaining Self of all sentient beings as well as insentient matter in their gross state differentiated by names and forms. Indeed, that which is called effect is nothing other than the cause appearing in a different state of being.

Nirguna Brahman

The various Scriptural passages declaring that the Supreme Brahman is devoid of attributes (nirguna) are also validated in the sense that He has no negative attributes, as the Vedas testify:—

> 'He [the Self] is free from sin, deathless, free from sorrow, hunger and thirst" —

this passage negates all unfavourable attributes, and then affirms His auspicious attributes thus:

> 'Who desires truth, whose will is truth' (Chan. Up., 8.7.1).

This Vedic text itself confirms therefore that negation of attributes in respect of Brahman (Guna-nisedha) is applicable in a general sense of [Brahman] being free from all negative attributes.

The doctrine that Brahman possess the attribute of intelligence is also quite tenable, because it amounts to saying that the true nature of Brahman, who is omniscient and omnipotent and is the antithesis of all that is negative, and who is the repository of all auspicious attributes, can be adequately defined only as One whose true nature is Intelligence Absolute, because He possesses self-revelation. The following passages teach that Brahman is the Knower: —

> 'He who is all-knowing, all wise (Mun. Up., 1.1.9).
>
> 'His supreme power is revealed, indeed, as various and natural, as consisting of knowledge, strength and activity' (Sve. Up., 6.8).
>
> 'My dear, by what means has one to understand the Knower?' (Br. Up., 2.4.14).

and other passages such as;—

> 'Brahman is Existence, Knowledge and Infinity' (Tait. Up., 2.1.1).

all teach that Brahman has the essential attribute of consciousness in as much as He can be defined only as [Cosmic] Intelligence, and because He is also self-revealing.

In the texts —

> 'He desired, "May I become manifold" (Tait. Up., 2.6.1),
> 'It thought, "May I become many (Chan. Up, 6.2.3),
> 'It became differentiated by names and forms' (Brh. Up., 1:4:7)

— it is affirmed that Brahman thus exists of His own free will in a wonderful plurality of expressions having all immovable and movable entities as His 'corporeality'. Consequently it is wrong to maintain the opposite view that Brahman is not the Over-self of the multifarious manifestations [of the phenomenal universe] in a real sense.

Thus, in the following texts, what is denied is the manifold existence of the ātman independent of Brahman: —

> 'He obtains death after death (continues re-incarnating) who sees difference here' (Kath. Up., 2.4.10),
>
> 'There is nothing here that is manifold' (Brh. Up. 6:4:19 & Kat. Up. 4:10),
>
> 'But where there is duality [notion of independence from Brahman], as it were, there one sees another.............. but where everything has become the Self.......... there, by what [organ] can one [independently] see what [independent thing] .... Who shall know which by what?' (Br. Up., 2:4:14 & 4:5:15).

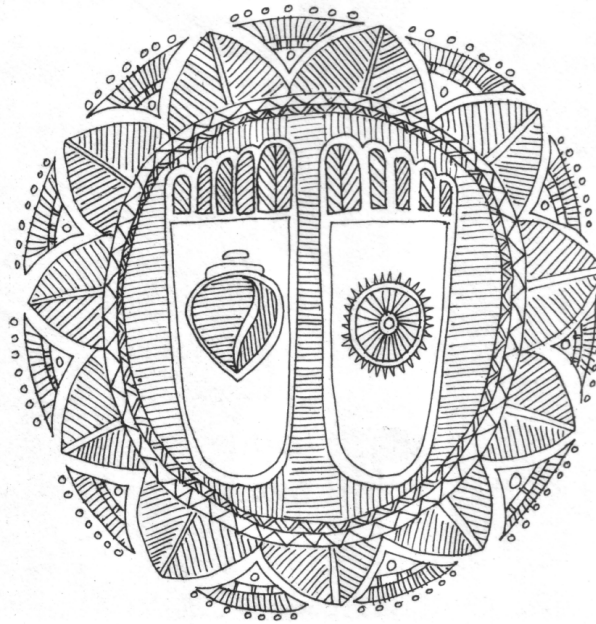
There also can be no denial of the manifold modality of the Brahman resulting from It's spontaneous assumption of various names and forms because this is established in Vedic texts such as; —

> 'May I become manifold' (Tait. Up., 2:6:1 and Chan. Up., 6:2:3) etc.

This manifold modality is declared and affirmed in the commencement of even that passage which negates multiplicity by asserting;—

> 'But where everything has become the Self for one' (Br.Up., 4:5:15).
>
> 'Everything departs from him who knows everything to be apart from Him' (Br.Up., 2:4:6 & 4.5.7)
>
> 'Lo, verily from this great Being has been breathed forth that which is Rig Veda' (Ibid. 2:4:10).

Thus, there is no contradiction whatsoever among the Scriptural passages which assert difference in the essential nature, and in the manifested state, between the Self, matter and the Lord. There is also no contradiction in the Scriptural statement that they are identical. The same relationship that exists between the jīva and its physical body exists invariably between the Lord and His "body" — the sentient and insentient entities. The Vedic texts themselves establish that those entities which make up the '*corporeality'* [of the Lord], exist in a subtle state of non-differentiation in the causal condition. In the state of effect they change into a gross state with names and forms, and are then capable of differentiation into a multiplicity of entities as modes [expressions] of the Supreme Person.

Thus there is no space whatsoever for entertaining those [Advaitic] doctrines which impose nescience (*avidya* = ignorance) on Brahman; and the view [of Bhāskara's Bhedābheda] describing the differences in Brahman as due to certain limiting conditions (*upādhis*) and other such teachings [those of Yādava-prakāśa's] all of which are based upon unsound logic and are contrary to the Vedas. Let this verbose polemic end here!

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klaibyaṃ mā sma gamaḥ pārtha naitat-tvayyupapadyate || 3 ||
kathaṃ bhīṣmam ahaṃ saṅkhye droṇaṃ ca madhusūdana || 4 ||
gurūn ahatvā hi mahānubhāvān śreyo bhoktuṃ bhaikṣyam apīha loke || 5 ||
na caitad vidmaḥ kataran no garīyo yadvā jayema yadi vā no jayeyuḥ || 6 ||
kārpaṇya doṣopahata svabhāvaḥ pṛcchāmi tvāṃ dharma samūḍha cetasaḥ || 7 ||
na hi prapaśyāmi mamāpanudyād yacchokam ucchoṣaṇam indriyāṇām || 8 ||
evam uktvā hṛṣīkeśaṃ guḍakeśaḥ parañtapa || 9 ||
tam uvāca hṛṣikeśaḥ prasanniva bhārata || 10 ||
aśocyān anvaśocas tvaṃ prajñāvādāṃśca bhāṣase || 11 ||
na tvevāhaṃ jātu nāsaṃ na tvaṃ neme janādhipāḥ || 12 ||
dehino'smin yathā dehe kaumāraṃ yauvanaṃ jarā || 13 ||
mātrā sparśās tu kaunteya śītoṣṇa sukha-duḥkhadāḥ || 14 ||
yaṃ hi na vyathayantyete puruṣaṃ puruṣarṣabha || 15 ||
nāsato vidyate bhāvo nābhāvo vidyate sataḥ || 16 ||
avināśi tu tad viddhi yena sarvam idaṃ tatam || 17 ||
antavanta ime dehā nityasyoktāḥ śarīriṇaḥ || 18 ||
ya enaṃ vetti hantāraṃ yaścainaṃ manyate hatam || 19 ||
na jāyate mriyate vā kadācin nāyaṃ bhūtvā bhavitā vā na bhūyaḥ || 20 ||
vedāvināśinaṃ nityaṃ ya enam ajam avyayam || 21 ||
vāsāṃsi jīrṇāni yathā vihāya navāni gṛhṇāti naro'parāṇi || 22 ||
nainaṃ chindanti śastrāṇi nainaṃ dehati pāvakaḥ || 23 ||
acchedyo'yam adāhyo'yaṃ akledyo'śoṣya eva ca || 24 ||
avyakto'yam acintyo'yam avikāryo'yam ucyate || 25 ||
atha cainaṃ nitya jātam nityaṃ vā manyase mṛtam || 26 ||
jātasya hi dhruvo mṛtyur dhruvaṃ janma mṛtasya ca || 27 ||
avyaktādīni bhūtāni vyakta-madhyāni bhārata || 28 ||
āścaryavat paśyati kaścid enam āścaryavad vadati tathaiva cānyaḥ || 29 ||
dehī nityam avadhyo'yaṃ dehe sarvasya bhārata || 30 ||
sva-dharmam api cāvekṣya na vikampitum arhasi || 31 ||
yadṛcchayā copapannaṃ svarga dvāram apāvṛtam || 32 ||
athacet tvam imaṃ dharmyaṃ saṅgrāmaṃ na kariṣyasi || 33 ||
akīrtiṃ cāpi bhūtāni kathayiṣyanti te'vyayām || 34 ||
bhayād raṇād uparataṃ maṃsyante tvāṃ mahārathāḥ || 35 ||
avācya vādāṃśca bahūn vadiṣyanti tavāhitāḥ || 36 ||
hato vā prāpsyasi svargaṃ jitvā vā bhokṣyase mahīn || 37 ||
sukha-duḥkhe same kṛtvā lābhālābhau jayājayau || 38 ||
eṣā te'bhihitā sāṅkhye buddhir yoge tvimāṃ śṛṇu || 39 ||
nehābhikramanāśo'sti pratyavāyo na vidyate || 40 ||
vyavasāyātmikā buddhir ekeha kurunandana || 41 ||
yām imāṃ puṣpitāṃ vācaṃ pravadanty-avipaścitaḥ || 42 ||
kāmātmānaḥ svarga-parā janma-karma-phala-pradām || 43 ||
bhogaiśvarya prasaktānāṃ tayāpahṛta cetasām || 44 ||
trai-guṇya viṣayā vedā nistrai-guṇyop bhavārjuna || 45 ||
yāvān artha upadāne sarvataḥ saṃplutodake || 46 ||
karmaṇy-evādhikāras te mā phaleṣu kadācana || 47 ||
yogasthaḥ kuru karmāṇi saṅgaṃ tyaktvā dhanañjaya || 48 ||
dūreṇa hyavaraṃ karma buddhi-yogād dhanañjaya || 49 ||
buddhi-yukto jahātīha ubhe sukṛta duṣkṛte || 50 ||
karmajaṃ buddhi-yuktā hi phalaṃ tyaktvā manīṣiṇaḥ || 51 ||
yadā te mohakalilaṃ buddhir vyatitariṣyati || 52 ||
śruti vipratipannā te yadā sthāsyasi niścalā || 53 ||

sthita-prajñasya kā bhāṣā samādhisthasya keśava || 54 ||
prajahāti yadā kāmān sarvān pārtha manogatān || 55 ||
duḥkheṣv-anudvigna-manāḥ sukheṣu vigata spṛhaḥ || 56 ||
yaḥ sarvatrānabhisnehas tat tat prāpya śubhāśubham || 57 ||
yadā saṃharate cāyaṃ kūrmo'ṅgānīva sarvaśaḥ || 58 ||
viṣayā vinivartante nirāhārasya dehinaḥ || 59 ||
yatato hyapi kaunteya puruṣasya vipaścitaḥ || 60 ||
tāni sarvāṇi saṃyamya yukta āsīta matparaḥ || 61 ||
dhyāyato viṣayān puṃsaḥ saṅgas teṣūpajāyate || 62 ||
krodhād-bhavati saṃmohaḥ saṃmohāt smṛti-vibhramaḥ || 63 ||
rāga-dveṣa viyuktais tu viṣayān indriyaiś-caran || 64 ||
prasāde sarva-duḥkhānāṃ hānir asyopajāyate || 65 ||
nāsti buddhir-ayuktasya na cāpyuktasya bhāvanā || 66 ||
indriyāṇāṃ hi caratāṃ yan mano'nuvidhīyate || 67 ||
tasmād yasya mahābāho nigṛhītāni sarvaśaḥ || 68 ||
yā niśā sarva bhūtānāṃ tasyāṃ jāgarti saṃyamī || 69 ||
apūryamāṇam acala pratiṣṭhaṃ samudram āpaḥ praviśanti yadvat || 70 ||
vihāya kāmān yaḥ sarvān pumāṃś-carati niḥspṛhaḥ || 71 ||
eṣā brāhmī-sthitiḥ pārtha naināṃ prāpya vimuhyati || 72 ||

Chapter 3

jyāyasī cetkarmaṇaste matā buddhirjanārdana || 1 ||
vyāmiśreṇaiva vākyena buddhiṃ mahayasīva me || 2 ||
loke'smin dvividhā niṣṭhā purā proktā mayā'nagha || 3 ||
na karmaṇāmanārambhānnaiṣkarmyaṃ puruṣo'śnute || 4 ||
na kaścit kṣaṇamapi jātu tiṣṭhatyakarmakṛt || 5 ||
karmendriyāṇi saṃyamya ya āste manasā smaran || 6 ||
yastvindriyāṇi manasā niyamyārabhate'rjuna || 7 ||
niyataṃ kuru karma tvaṃ karma jyāyayo hyakarmaṇaḥ || 8 ||
yajñārthāt karmaṇo'nyatra loko'yaṃ karma bandhanaḥ || 9 ||
saha yajñaiḥ prajāḥ sṛṣṭvā purovāca prajāpatiḥ || 10 ||
devān bhāvayetānena te devā bhāvayaṃtu vaḥ || 11 ||
iṣṭānbhogāniha vo devā dāsyante yajñabhāvitāḥ || 12 ||
yajñaśiṣṭāśinaḥ santo mucyante sarva kilbiṣaiḥ || 13 ||
annādbhavanti būtāni parjanyādannasaṃbhavaḥ || 14 ||
karma brahmodbhavaṃ viddhi brahmākṣara samudbhavam || 15 ||
evaṃ pravvartitaṃ cakraṃ nānu vartayatīha yaḥ || 16 ||
yastvātmaratireva syādātma tṛpptaśca mānavaḥ || 17 ||
naiva tasya kṛtenārtho nākṛteneha kaścana || 18 ||
tasmādasaktaḥ satataṃ kāryaṃ karma samācara || 19 ||
karmaṇaiva hi saṃsiddhimāsthitā janakādayaḥ || 20 ||
yadyadācarati śreṣṭhastattadevetaro janaḥ || 21 ||
na me parthāsti kartavyaṃ triṣu lokeṣu kiṃcana || 22 ||
yadi hyahaṃ varteyaṃ jātu karmaṇyatandritaḥ || 23 ||
utsīdeyurime lokā na kuryaṃ karma cedaham || 24 ||
saktāḥ karmaṇyavidvāṃso yathā kurvanti bhārata || 25 ||
na buddhibhedaṃ janayedajñānāṃ karmasaṃginām || 26 ||
prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ || 27 ||
tattvavittu mahābāho guṇakarmavibhāgayoḥ || 28 ||
prakṛterguṇa saṃmūḍhāḥ sajjante guṇakarmasu || 29 ||
mayi sarvāṇi karmāṇi sanyasyādhyātmacetasā || 30 ||
ye me matam idaṃ nityam anutiṣṭhanti mānavāḥ || 31 ||
ye tvetad abhyasūyanto nānutiṣṭhanti me matam || 32 ||
sadṛśaṃ ceṣṭate svasyāḥ prakṛterjñānavān api || 33 ||

indriyasyendriyasyārthe rāgadveṣau vyavasthitau || 34 ||
śreyān svadharmo viguṇaḥ paradharmāt svanuṣṭhitāt || 35 ||
atha kena prayukto'yaṃ pāpaṃ carati pūruṣaḥ || 36 ||
kāma eṣa krodha eṣa rajoguṇa samudbhavaḥ || 37 ||
dhūmenāvriyate vahniryathādarśo malena ca || 38 ||
āvṛtaṃ jñānametena jñānino nityavairiṇā || 39 ||
indriyāṇi mano buddhirasyādhiṣṭhānamucyate || 40 ||
tasmāttvamiṃdriyāṇyādau niyamya bharatarṣabha || 41 ||
indriyāṇi parāṇyāhurindrebhyaḥ paraṃ manaḥ || 42 ||
evaṃ buddheḥ paraṃ buddhvā saṃstabhyātmānam ātmanā || 43 ||

Chapter 4

imaṃ vivasvate yogaṃ proktavān ahamavyayam || 1 ||
evaṃ paramparā prāptam imaṃ rājarṣayo viduḥ || 2 ||
sa evāyaṃ mayā te'dya yogaḥ proktaḥ purātanaḥ || 3 ||
aparaṃ bhavato janma paraṃ janma vivasvataḥ || 4 ||
bahūni me vyatītāni janmāni tava cārjuna || 5 ||
ajo'pi sannavyayātmā bhūtānāmīśvaro'pi san || 6 ||
yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānirbhavati bhārata || 7 ||
paritrāṇāya sādhūnāṃ vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām || 8 ||
janma karma ca me divuamevaṃ yo vetti tattvataḥ || 9 ||
vītarāgabhayakrodhā manmayā māmupāśritāḥ || 10 ||
ye yathā māṃ prapadyante tāṃstathaiva bhajāmyaham || 11 ||
kāṅkṣantaḥ karmaṇāṃ siddhiṃ yajanta iha devatāḥ || 12 ||
cāturvarṇyaṃ mayā sṛṣṭaṃ guṇakarma vibhāgaśaḥ || 13 ||
na māṃ karmāṇi limpanti na me karmaphale spṛhā || 14 ||
evaṃ jñātvā kṛtaṃ karma pūrvairapi mumukṣubhiḥ || 15 ||
kiṃ karma kimakarmeti kavayo'pyatra mohitāḥ || 16 ||
karmaṇo hyapi boddhavyaṃ boddhavyaṃ ca vikarmaṇaḥ || 17 ||
karmaṇya karma yaḥ paśyedakarmaṇi ca karma yaḥ || 18 ||
yasya sarve samārambhāḥ kāma saṃkalpa varjitāḥ || 19 ||
tyaktvā karma phalāsaṃgaṃ nitya tṛpto nirāśrayaḥ || 20 ||
nirāśīr yatacittātmā tyakta sarva parigrahaḥ || 21 ||
yadṛcchālābha santuṣṭo dvaṃdvātito vimatsaraḥ || 22 ||
gatasaṃgasya muktasya jñānāvasthita cetasaḥ || 23 ||
brahmārpaṇaṃ brahmahavir brahmāgnau brahmaṇā hutam || 24 ||
daivamevāpare yajñaṃ yoginaḥ paryupāsate || 25 ||
śrotrādīnindriyāṇyanye saṃyamāgniṣu juhvati || 26 ||
sarvāṇīndriyāṇi prāṇa karmāṇi cāpare || 27 ||
dravya yajñāstapo yajñā yoga yajñāstathā'pare || 28 ||
apāne juhvati prāṇaṃ prāṇe'pānaṃ tathā'pare || 29 ||
apare niyatāhārāḥ prāṇān prāṇeṣu juhvati || 30 ||
yajñaśiṣṭāmṛta bhujo yānti brahma sanātanam || 31 ||
evaṃ bahu vidhā vitatā brahmaṇo mukhe || 32 ||
śreyān dravyamayād yajñāj-jñāna yājñaḥ parantapa || 33 ||
tadviddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā || 34 ||
yajjñātvā na punarmohameva yāsyasi pāṇḍava || 35 ||
api cedasi pāpebhyaḥ sarvebhyaḥ pāpakṛtamaḥ || 36 ||
yathaidhāṃsi samiddho'gnirbhasmāt kurute'rjuna || 37 ||
na hi jñānena sadṛśaṃ pavitram iha vidyate || 38 ||
śraddhāvā`llabhate jñānaṃ tatparaḥ saṃyatendriyaḥ || 39 ||
ajñaścāśraddhānaśca saṃśayātmā vinaśyati || 40 ||
yogasaṃnyasta karmāṇaṃ jñāna saṃcchinna saṃśayam || 41 ||
tasmādajñāna saṃbhūtaṃ hṛtsthaṃ jñānāsinātmanaḥ || 42 ||

Chapter 5

saṃnyāsaṃ karmaṇāṃ kṛṣṇa punaryogaṃ ca śaṃsati || 1 ||
saṃnyāsaḥ karma yogaśca niḥśreyasakarāvubhau || 2 ||
jñeyaḥ sa nitya saṃnyāsī yo na dveṣṭi na kāṅkṣati || 3 ||
sāṃkhyayogau pṛthagbālāḥ pravadanti na paṇḍitāḥ || 4 ||
yatsāṃkhyaiḥ prāpyate sthānaṃ tadyogairapi gamyate || 5 ||
sa.nyāsastu mahābāho duḥkhamāptumayogataḥ || 6 ||
yogayukto viśuddhātmā vijitātmā jitendriyaḥ || 7 ||
naiva kiñcit karomīti yukto manyeta tattvavit || 8 ||
pralapan visṛjan gṛhṇannunimiṣan nimiṣannapi || 9 ||
brahmaṇyādāya karmāṇi saṅgaṃ tyaktvā karoti yaḥ || 10 ||
kāyena manasā buddhyā kelavairindriyairapi || 11 ||
yuktaḥ karma phalaṃ tyaktvā śāntimāpnoti naiṣṭhikīm || 12 ||
sarva karmāṇi manasā saṃnyasĻāste sukhaṃ vaśī || 13 ||
na kartṛtvaṃ na karmāṇi lokasya sṛjati prabhuḥ || 14 ||
nādatte kasyacitpāpaṃ na caiva sukṛtaṃ vibhuḥ || 15 ||
jñānena tu tadjñānaṃ yeṣāṃ nāśitam ātmanaḥ || 16 ||
tadbuddhayas tadātmānastanniṣṭhās tatparāyaṇāḥ || 17 ||
vidyā vinaya saṃpanne brāhmaṇe gavi hastini || 18 ||
ihaiva tairjitaḥ sargo yeṣāṃ sāmye sthitaṃ manaḥ || 19 ||
na prahṛṣyetpriyaṃ prāpya nodvijet prāpya cāpriyam || 20 ||
bāhyasparśeṣvasaktātmā vindatyātmani yatsukham || 21 ||
ye hi saṃsparśajā bhogā duḥkhayonaya eva ca || 22 ||
śaknotīhaiva yaḥ soṣuṃ prākśarīra vimokṣaṇāt || 23 ||
yo'ntaḥ sukho'ntarā rāmastathāntar jyotireva yaḥ || 24 ||
labhante brahmanirvāṇam ṛṣayaḥ kṣīṇa kalmaṣāḥ || 25 ||
kāma krodha viyuktānāṃ yatīnāṃ yatacetasām || 26 ||
sparśān kṛtvā bahirbāhyāṃścakṣuścaivāntare bhruvoḥ || 27 ||
yatendriya manobuddhirmunir mokṣa parāyaṇaḥ || 28 ||
bhoktāraṃ yajña tapasāṃ sarva loka maheśvaram || 29 ||

Chapter 6

anāśritaḥ karmaphalaṃ kāryaṃ karma karoti yaḥ || 1 ||
yaṃ saṃnyāsamiti prāhuryogaṃ taṃ. viddhi pāṇḍava || 2 ||
ārurukṣormuneryogaṃ karma kāraṇam ucyate || 3 ||
yadā hi nendriyārtheṣu na karmasvanuṣajjate || 4 ||
uddharedātmanātmānaṃ nātmānam avasādayet || 5 ||
bandhurātmā'tmanas tasya yenātmaivātmanā jitaḥ || 6 ||
jitātmanaḥ praśāntasya paramātmā samāhitaḥ || 7 ||
jñāna vijñāna tṛptātmā kūṭastho jitendriyaḥ || 8 ||
suhṛn mitrāryudāsīna madhastha dveṣya bandhuṣu || 9 ||
yogī yuñjīta satatam ātmānaṃ rahasi sthitaḥ || 10 ||
śucau deśe pratiṣṭhāpya sthitamāsanam ātmanaḥ || 11 ||
tatraikāgraṃ manaḥ kṛtvā yatacittendriya kriyaḥ || 12 ||
samaṃ kāyaśirogrīvaṃ dhārayannacalaṃ sthiraḥ || 13 ||
praśāntātmā vigatabhīrbrahmacāri vrate sthitaḥ || 14 ||
yunnjannevaṃ sadā'tmānaṃ yogī niyatamānasaḥ || 15 ||
nātyaśnatastu yogo'sti na caikāntamanaśnataḥ || 16 ||
yuktāhāra vihārasya yukta ceṣṭasya karmasu || 17 ||
yadā viniyataṃ cittamātmanyevāvatiṣṭhate || 18 ||
yathā dīpo nivātasthe neṅgate sopamā smṛtā || 19 ||
yatroparamate cittaṃ niruddhaṃ yogasevayā || 20 ||
sukhamātyantikaṃ yattadbuddhgrāhyamatīndriyam || 21 ||

yaṃ labdhvā cāparaṃ lābhaṃ manyate nādhikaṃ tataḥ ॥ 22 ॥
taṃ vidyād duḥkha saṃyoga viyoga saṃjñitam ॥ 23 ॥
saṃkalpa prabhavān kāmāṃstyaktvā sarvānaśeṣataḥ ॥ 24 ॥
śanaiḥ śanairuparamed buddhyā dhṛtigṛhītayā ॥ 25 ॥
yato yato niścarati manaścañcalam asthiraṃ ॥ 26 ॥
praśānta manasaṃ hyenaṃ yoginaṃ sukhamuttamam ॥ 27 ॥
yuñjannevaṃ sadā'tmānaṃ yogī vigata kalmaṣaḥ ॥ 28 ॥
sarvabhūtastham ātmānaṃ sarvabhūtāni cātmani ॥ 29 ॥
yo māṃ paśyati sarvatra sarvaṃ ca mayi paśyati ॥ 30 ॥
sarvabhūtasthitaṃ yo māṃ bhajatyekatvamāsthitaḥ ॥ 31 ॥
ātmaupamyena sarvatra samaṃ paśyati yo'rjuna ॥ 32 ॥
yo'yaṃ yogastvayā proktaḥ sāmyena madhusūdhana ॥ 33 ॥
cañcalaṃ hi manaḥ kṛṣṇa pramāthi balavaddṛṣam ॥ 34 ॥
śrī bhagavān uvāca
asaṃśayaṃ mahābāho mano durnigrahaṃ calam ॥ 35 ॥
asaṃyatātmanā yogo duṣprāpa iti me matiḥ ॥ 36 ॥
ayatiḥ śraddhayopeto yogāc-calita-mānasaḥ ॥ 37 ॥
kaccin-nobhaya-vibhraṣṭaśchinnābhram iva naśyati ॥ 38 ॥
etan-me saṃśayaṃ kṛṣṇa chettum arhasy aśeṣataḥ ॥ 39 ॥
pārtha naiveha nāmutra vināśas tasya vidyate ॥ 40 ॥
prāpya puṇya-kṛtāṃ lokān uṣitvā śāśvatīḥ samāḥ ॥ 41 ॥
athavā yoginām eva kule bhavati dhīmatām ॥ 42 ॥
tatra taṃ buddhi saṃyogaṃ labhate paurva-dehikam ॥ 43 ॥
pūrvābhyāsane tenaiva hriyate hyavaśo'pi saḥ ॥ 44 ॥
prayatnād yatamānastu yogī saṃśuddha-kilbiṣaḥ ॥ 45 ॥
tapasvibhyo'dhiko yogī jñānibhyo'pi mato'dhikaḥ ॥ 46 ॥
yoginām api sarveṣāṃ madgatenāntarātmanā ॥ 47 ॥

Chapter 7

mayyāsakta manāḥ pārtha yogaṃ yuñjan madāśrayaḥ ॥ 1 ॥
jñānaṃ te'haṃ savijñānamidaṃ vakṣyāmyaśeṣataḥ ॥ 2 ॥
manuṣyāṇāṃ sahasreṣu kaścidyatati siddhaye ॥ 3 ॥
bhūmirāpo'nalo vāyuḥ khaṃ mano buddhireva ca ॥ 4 ॥
apareyamitastvanyāṃ prakṬtiṃ viddhi me parām ॥ 5 ॥
etadyonīni bhūtāni sarvāṇītyupadhāraya ॥ 6 ॥
mattaḥ parataraṃ nānyat kiṃcidasti dhanaṃjayaḥ ॥ 7 ॥
raso'hamapsu kaunteya prabhāsmi śaśisūryayo ॥ 8 ॥
puṇyo gandhaḥ pṛthivyāṃ ca tejaścāsmi vibhāvasau ॥ 9 ॥
bījaṃ māṃ sarvabhūtānāṃ viddhi pārtha sanātanaṃ ॥ 10 ॥
balaṃ balavatāṃ cāhaṃ kāmarāga vivarjitam ॥ 11 ॥
ye caiva sāttvikā bhāvā rājasāstāmasāśca ye ॥ 12 ॥
tribhir-guṇa-mayair-bhāvair-ebhiḥ sarvamidaṃ jagat ॥ 13 ॥
daivī hyeṣā guṇamayī mama māyā duratyayā ॥ 14 ॥
na māṃ duṣkṛtino mūḍhāḥ prapadyante narādhamāḥ ॥ 15 ॥
caturvidhā bhajante māṃ janāḥ sukṛtino'rjuna ॥ 16 ॥
teṣāṃ jñānī nityayukta eka bhaktirviśiṣyate ॥ 17 ॥
udārāḥ sarva evaitaṃ jñānī tvātmaiva me matam ॥ 18 ॥
bahūnāṃ janmanām ante jñānavān māṃ prapadyate ॥ 19 ॥
kāmais tais tair hṛta-jñānāḥ prapadyante'nya-devatāḥ ॥ 20 ॥
yo yo yāṃ yāṃ tanuṃ bhaktaḥ śraddhayārcitum icchati ॥ 21 ॥
sa tayā śraddhayā yuktas tasyārādhanam īhate ॥ 22 ॥
antavattu phalaṃ teṣāṃ tad bhavaty alpa medhasām ॥ 23 ॥
avyaktaṃ vyaktim āpannaṃ manyante mām abuddhayaḥ ॥ 24 ॥
nāhaṃ prakāśaḥ sarvasya yoga māyā samāvṛtaḥ ॥ 25 ॥

vedāhaṃ samatītāni vartamānāni cārjuna ॥ 26 ॥
icchādveṣa samutthena dvandva mohena bhārata ॥ 27 ॥
yeṣāṃ tvanta-gataṃ pāpaṃ janānāṃ puṇya-karmaṇām ॥ 28 ॥
jarā-maraṇa-mokṣayā mām-āśritya yatanti ye ॥ 29॥
sādhibhūtādhidaivaṃ māṃ sādhi yajñaṃ ca ye viduḥ ॥ 30 ॥

Chapter 8

kiṃ tad-brahma kim-adhyātma kiṃ karma puruṣottama ॥ 1 ॥
adhiyajñaḥ kathaṃ ko'tra dehe'smin madhusūdana ॥ 2 ॥
akṣaraṃ paramaṃ svabhāvo'dhyātmam-ucyate ॥ 3 ॥
adhibhūtaṃ kṣaro bhāvaḥ puruṣaś-cādhidaivataṃ ॥ 4 ॥
antakāle ca māmeva smaran-muktvā kalevaram ॥ 5 ॥
yaṃ yaṃ vāpi smaran-bhāvaṃ tyajatyante kalevaram ॥ 6 ॥
tasmāt sarveṣu kāleṣu mām-anusmara yudhya ca ॥ 7 ॥
abhyāsa-yoga-yuktena cetasā nānya-gāminā ॥ 8 ॥
kaviṃ purāṇam anuśāsitāram aṇoraṇīyāṃsam anusmared yaḥ ॥ 9 ॥
prayāṇa-kāle manasācalena bhaktyā yukto yogabalena caiva ॥ 10 ॥
yadakṣaraṃ deva-vido vadanti viśanti yad-yatayo vītarāgāḥ ॥ 11 ॥
sarva-dvārāṇi saṃyamya mano hṛdi nirudhya ca ॥ 12 ॥
om-ity-ekākṣaraṃ brahma vyāharan mām-anusmaran ॥ 13 ॥
ananya-cetāḥ satataṃ yo māṃ smarati nityaśaḥ ॥ 14 ॥
mām-upetya punar-janma duḥkhālayam aśāśvatam ॥ 15 ॥
ābrahma bhuvanāllokāḥ punarāvartino'rjuna ॥ 16 ॥
sahasra-yuga-paryantam aharyad brahmaṇo viduḥ ॥ 17 ॥
avyaktād-vyaktayaḥ sarvāḥ prabhavanty-ahar-āgame ॥ 18 ॥
bhūtagrāmaḥ sa evāyaṃ bhūtvā bhūtvā pralīyate ॥ 19 ॥
paras-tasmāt tu bhavo'nyo'vyakto'vyaktāt-sanātanaḥ ॥ 20 ॥
avyakto'kṣara ity-uktas-tamāhuḥ paramāṃ gatim ॥ 21 ॥
puruṣaḥ sa paraḥ pārtha bhaktyā labhyas-tv-ananyayā ॥ 22 ॥
yatra kāle tvan-āvṛttim āvṛttiṃ caiva yoginaḥ ॥ 23 ॥
agnir-jyotir-ahaḥ śuklaḥ ṣaṇmāsā uttarāyaṇam ॥ 24 ॥
dhūmo rātris-tathā kṛṣṇaḥ ṣaṇmāsā dakṣiṇāyanam ॥ 25 ॥
śukla-kṛṣṇe gatī hyete jagataḥ śāśvate mate ॥ 26 ॥
naite sṛtī pārtha jānan yogī muhyatī kaścana ॥ 27 ॥
vedeṣu yajñeṣu tapaḥsu caiva dāneṣu yat puṇya-phalaṃ pradiṣṭam ॥ 28 ॥

Chapter 9

idaṃ te guhyatamaṃ pravakṣyāmy-anasūyave ॥ 1 ॥
rājavidyā rājaguhyaṃ pavitram idam uttamam ॥ 2 ॥
aśraddadhānāḥ puruṣā dharmasyāsya parantapa ॥ 3 ॥
mayā tatam idaṃ sarvaṃ jagad avyakta mūrtinā ॥ 4 ॥
na ca matsthāni bhūtāni paśya me yogam aiśvaryam ॥ 5 ॥
yathākāśa-sthito nityaṃ vāyuḥ sarvatrago mahān ॥ 6 ॥
sarvabhūtāni kaunteya prakṛtiṃ yānti māmikām ॥ 7 ॥
prakṛtiṃ svām-avaṣṭabhya visṛjāmi punaḥ punaḥ ॥ 8 ॥
na ca māṃ tāni karmāṇi nibadhnanti dhanañjaya ॥ 9 ॥
mayādhyakṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ sūyate sacarācaram ॥ 10 ॥
avajānanti māṃ mūḍhā mānuṣīṃ tanumāśritam ॥ 11 ॥
moghāśā mogha-karmāṇo mogha-jñānā vicetasaḥ ॥ 12 ॥
mahātmānastu māṃ pārtha daivīṃ prakṛtim-āśritāḥ ॥ 13 ।
satataṃ kīrtayanto māṃ yatantaśca dṛḍvratāḥ ॥ 14 ॥
jñānayajñena cāpyanye yajanto mām-upāsate ॥ 15 ॥
ahaṃ kratur-ahaṃ yajñaḥ svadhāham aham auṣadham ॥ 16 ॥

pitāham-asya jagato mātā dhātā pitāmahaḥ || 17 ||
gatir-bhartā prabhuḥ sākṣī nivāsaḥ śaraṇaṃ suhṛt || 18 ||
tapāmayaham ahaṃ varṣaṃ nigṛhṇāmy utsṛjāmi ca || 19 ||
traividya māṃ somapāḥ pūtapāpa yajñair iṣṭvā svargatiṃ prārthayante || 20 ||
te taṃ bhuktvā svarga-lokaṃ viśālaṃ kṣīṇe puṇye marta-lokaṃ viśanti || 21 ||
ananyāś-cintayanto māṃ ye janāḥ paryupāsate || 22 ||
ye'pyanya-devatā-bhaktā yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ || 23 ||
ahaṃ hi sarva-yajñānāṃ bhoktā ca prabhureva ca || 24 ||
yānti deva-vratā devān pitṛn-yānti pitṛ-vratāḥ || 25 ||
patraṃ puṣpaṃ phalaṃ toyaṃ yo me bhaktyā prayacchati || 26 ||
yat-karoṣi yad-aśnāsi yaj-juhoṣi dadāsi yat || 27 ||
śubhāśubha phalair-evaṃ mokṣyase karma-bandhanaiḥ || 28 ||
samo'haṃ sarva-bhūteṣu na me dveṣyo'sti na priyaḥ || 29 ||
api-cet sudurācāro bhajate mām-ananyabhāk || 30 ||
kṣipraṃ bhavati dharmātmā śāśvacchāntiṃ nigacchati || 31 ||
māṃ hi pārtha vyapāśritya ye'pi syuḥ pāpa-yonayaḥ || 32 ||
kiṃ punar-brāhmaṇāḥ puṇyā bhaktā rājarṣayas-tathā || 33 ||
manmanā bhava madbhakto madyājī māṃ namaskuru || 34 ||

Chapter 10

bhūya eva mahābāho śṛṇu me paramaṃ vacaḥ || 1 ||
na me viduḥ suragaṇāḥ prabhavaṃ na maharṣayaḥ || 2 ||
yo mām ajam anādiṃ ca vetti loka-maheśvaram || 3 ||
buddhirjñānam asaṃmohaḥ kṣamā satyaṃ damaḥ śamaḥ || 4 ||
ahiṃsā samatā tuṣṭis-tapo dānaṃ yaśo'pyaśaḥ || 5 ||
maharṣayaḥ sapta pūrve catvāro manavas-tathā || 6 ||
etāṃ vibhūtiṃ yogaṃ ca mama yo vetti tattvataḥ || 7 ||
ahaṃ sarvasya prabhavo mattaḥ sarvaṃ pravartate || 8 ||
mac-cittā mad-gata-prāṇā bodhayantaḥ parasparam || 9 ||
teṣāṃ satata-yuktānāṃ bhajatāṃ prīti-pūrvakam || 10 ||
teṣām evānukam pārtham aham ajñānajaṃ tamaḥ || 11 ||
paraṃ brahma paraṃ dhāma pavitraṃ paramaṃ bhavān || 12 ||
ahus-tvām ṛṣayaḥ sarve devārṣir-nāradas -tathā || 13 ||
sarvam etad ṛtaṃ manye yanmāṃ vadasi keśava || 14 ||
svayam evātmanātmānaṃ vettha tvaṃ puruṣottama || 15 ||
vaktum arhasy aśeṣeṇa divyā hyātma vibhūtayaḥ || 16 ||
katham ivyām ahaṃ yogiṃs tvāṃ sadā paricintayan || 17 ||
vistareṇātmano yogaṃ vibhūtiṃ ca janārdana || 18 ||
hanta te kathayiṣyāmi divyā hyātma vibhūtayaḥ || 19 ||
aham ātmā guḍākeśa sarva bhūtasya sthitaḥ || 20 ||
ādityānām ahaṃ viṣṇur jyotiṣāṃ raviraṃśumān || 21 ||
vedānāṃ sāmavedo'smi devānām asmi vāsavaḥ || 22 ||
rudrāṇāṃ śaṃkaraścāsmi vitteśo yakṣarakṣasām || 23 ||
purodhasāṃ ca mukhyaṃ māṃ viddhi pārtha bṛhaspatim || 24 ||
maharṣīṇāṃ bhṛgur ahaṃ girāmasmy ekam akṣaram || 25 ||
aśvatthaḥ sarva vṛkṣāṇāṃ devārṣīṇāṃ ca nāradaḥ || 26 ||
uccaiḥśravasam aśvānāṃ viddhi mām amṛtodbhavam || 27 ||
āyudhānāmahaṃ vajraṃ dhenūnām asmi kāmadhuk || 28 ||
anantaścāsmi nāgānāṃ varuṇo yādasāmaham || 29 ||
prahlādaścāsmi daityānāṃ kālaḥ kalayatām aham || 30 ||
pavanaḥ pavatām asmi rāmaḥ śastrabhṛtāmaham || 31 ||
sargāṇām ādirantaśca madhyaṃ caivāham arjuna || 32 ||
akṣarāṇām akāro'smi dvandavaḥ sāmāsikasya ca || 33 ||
mṛtyuḥ sarva-haraścāham udbhavaśca bhaviṣyatām || 34 ||

bṛhatsāma tathā sāmnāṃ gāyatrī chandasām aham || 35 ||
dyūtaṃ chalayatām asmi tejas tejasvinām aham || 36 ||
vṛṣṇīnāṃ vāsudevo'smi pāṇḍavānāṃ dhanaṃjayaḥ || 37 ||
daṇḍo damayatām asmi nītir asmi jigīṣatām || 38 ||
yaccāpi sarva bhūtānāṃ bījaṃ tad aham arjuna || 39 ||
nānto'sti mama divyānāṃ vibhūtīnāṃ paraṃtapa || 40 ||
yad yad vibhūtimat sattvaṃ śrīmad ūrjitam eva ca || 41 ||
athavā bahunaitena kiṃ jñānena tavārjuna || 42 ||

Chapter 11

madanugrāya paramaṃ guhyam adhyātma saṃjñitam || 1 ||
bhavāpyayau hi bhūtānāṃ śrutau vistaraśo mayā || 2 ||
evam etad yathāttha tvam-ātmānaṃ parameśvara || 3 ||
manyase yadi tacchakyaṃ mayā draṣṭum iti prabho || 4 ||
paśya me pārtha rūpāṇi śataśo'tha sahasraśaḥ || 5 ||
paśyādityān vasūn rudrān aśvinau marutas tathā || 6 ||
ihaikasthaṃ jagat kṛtsnaṃ paśyādya sacarācaram || 7 ||
na tu śakyase draṣṭum anenaiva svacakṣuṣā || 8 ||
evam uktvā tato rājan mahāyogeśvaro hariḥ || 9 ||
aneka vaktra nayanam anekādbhuta darśanam || 10 ||
divya mālyāmbaradharaṃ divya gandhānulepanam || 11 ||
divi sūrya sahasrasya bhaved yugapad utthitā || 12 ||
tatraikasthaṃ jagat kṛtsnaṃ pravibhaktam enekadhā || 13 ||
tataḥ sa vismayāviṣṭo hṛṣṭa-romā dhanañjayaḥ || 14 ||
paśyāmi devāṃs tava deva dehe sarvāṃs tathā bhūta viśeṣa saṅghān || 15 ||
aneka bāhūdara vaktra netraṃ paśyāmi tvāṃ sarvato'nanta rūpam || 16 ||
kirīṭinaṃ gadinaṃ cakriṇaṃ ca tejorāśiṃ sarvato dīptimantam || 17 ||
tvamakṣaraṃ paramaṃ veditavyaṃ tvamasya viśvasya paraṃ nidhānam || 18 ||
anādi madhyāntam ananta-vīryam ananta bāhuṃ śaśi-sūrya netram || 19 ||
dyāvāpṛthivyor idam antaraṃ hi vyāptaṃ tvayaikena diśaśca sarvāḥ || 20 ||
amī hi tvāṃ surasaṅghā viśanti kecid bhītāḥ prāñjalayo gṛṇanti || 21 ||
rudrādityā vasavo ye ca sādhyā viśve'śvinau marutaścoṣmapāśca || 22 ||
rūpaṃ mahatte bahu vaktra netraṃ mahābāho bahu-bāhūru-pādam || 23 ||
nabhaḥ-spṛśaṃ dīptam aneka varṇaṃ vyāttānanaṃ dīpta viśāla-netram || 24 ||
daṃṣṭrā-karālāni ca te mukhāni dṛṣṭvaiva kālānala saṃnnibhāni || 25 ||
amī ca tvaṃ dhṛtarāṣṭrasya putrāḥ sarve sahaivāvanipāla saṅghaiḥ || 26 ||
vaktrāṇi te tvaramāṇā viśanti daṃṣṭrā-karālāni bhayānakāni || 27 ||
yathā nagīnāṃ bahavo'mbuvegāḥ samudram evābhimukhā dravanti || 28 ||
yathā pradīptaṃ jvalanaṃ pataṅgā viśanti nāśāya samṛddhavegāḥ || 29 ||
lelihyase grasamānaḥ samantāllokān samagrān vadanair jvaladbhiḥ || 30 ||
ākhyāhi me ko bhavān-ugra-rūpo namo'stu te deva-vara prasīda || 31 ||
kālo'smi loka-kṣaya-kṛt pravṛddho lokān samāhartum iha pravṛttaḥ || 32 ||
tasmāt tvam uttiṣṭha yaśo labhasva jitvā śatrūn bhuṅkṣva rājyaṃ samṛddham || 33 ||
droṇaṃ ca bhīṣmaṃ ca jayadrathaṃ ca karṇaṃ tathā'nyānapi yodhavīrān || 34 ||
etacchrutvā vacanaṃ keśavasya kṛtāñjalir vepamānaḥ kirīṭī || 35 ||
sthāne hṛṣīkeśa tava prakīrtyā jagat prahṛṣyaty-anurajyate ca || 36 ||
kasmācca te na nameran mahātman garīyase brahmaṇo'pyādikartre || 37 ||
tvam ādidevaḥ puruṣaḥ purāṇas-tvam asya viśvasya paraṃ nidhānam || 38 ||
vāyur-yamo'gnir-varuṇaḥ śaśāṅkaḥ prajāpatis-tvaṃ prapitā-mahaśca || 39 ||
namaḥ purastād atha pṛṣṭhas-te namo'stu te sarvata eva sarva || 40 ||
sakheti matvā prasabhaṃ yaduktaṃ he kṛṣṇa he yādava he sakheti || 41 ||
yaccāvahāsārtham asatkṛto 'si vihāra śayyāsana bhojaneṣu || 42 ||
pitāsi lokasya carācarasya tvamasya pūjyaśca gurur garīyān || 43 ||
tasmāt praṇamya praṇidhāya kāyaṃ prasādaye tvām ahm īśam īḍyam || 44 ||

adṛṣṭa-pūrvaṃ hṛṣito'smi dṛṣṭvā bhayena ca pravyathitaṃ mano me || 45 ||
kirīṭinaṃ gadinaṃ cakra-hastam-icchāmi tvāṃ draṣṭum ahaṃ tathaiva || 46 ||
mayā prasannena tavārjunedaṃ rūpaṃ paraṃ darśitam ātma yogāt || 47 ||
na veda yajñādhyayanair na dānair na ca kriyābhir na tapobhir ugraiḥ || 48 ||
mā te vyathā mā ca vimūḍha bhāvo dṛṣṭvā rūpaṃ ghoram īdṛṅ mamedam || 49 ||
ityarjunaṃ vāsudevas tathoktvā svakaṃ rūpaṃ darśayāmāsa bhūyaḥ || 50 ||
dṛṣṭvedaṃ mānuṣaṃ rūpaṃ tava saumyaṃ janārdana || 51 ||
sudurdarśam idaṃ rūpaṃ dṛṣṭavān asi yan mama || 52 ||
nāhaṃ vedair na tapasā na dānena na cejyayā || 53 ||
bhaktyā tvananyayā śakya aham evaṃ vidho 'rjuna || 54 ||
mat karma kṛn matparamo mad-bhaktaḥ saṅga-varjitaḥ || 55 ||

Chapter 12

evaṃ satatayuktā ye bhaktāstvāṃ paryupāsate || 1 ||
mayyāveśya mano ye māṃ nitya-yuktā upāsate || 2 ||
ye tvakṣaram-anirdeśyam-avyaktaṃ paryupāsate || 3 ||
saṃniyam endriya-grāmaṃ sarvatra samabuddhayaḥ || 4 ||
kleśo'dhikataras-teṣāṃ avyaktā-sakta-cetasām || 5 ||
ye tu sarvāṇi karmāṇi mayi saṃnyasya matparāḥ || 6 ||
teṣāṃ samuddhartā mṛtyu-saṃsāra-sāgarāt || 7 ||
mayyeva mana ādhatsva mayi buddhiṃ niveśaya || 8 ||
atha cittaṃ samādhātuṃ na śaknoṣi mayi sthiram || 9 ||
abhyāse'pyasamartho'si mat-karma paramo bhava || 10 ||
athaitad apyaśakto'si kartuṃ mad-yogam āśritaḥ || 11 ||
śreyo hi jñānam abhyāsāt jñānāddhyānaṃ viśiṣyate || 12 ||
adveṣṭā sarvabhūtānāṃ maitraḥ karuṇa eva ca || 13 ||
santuṣṭaḥ satataṃ yogī yatātmā dṛṣa-niścayaḥ || 14 ||
yasmān no dvijate loko lokān nodvijate ca yaḥ || 15 ||
anapekṣaḥ śucir dakṣa udāsīno gatavyathaḥ || 16 ||
yo na hṛṣyati na dveṣṭi na śocati na kāṅkṣati || 17 ||
samaḥ śatrau ca mitre ca tathā mānāpamānayoḥ || 18 ||
tulya nindā stutir maunī santuṣṭo yena kenacit || 19 ||
ye tu dharmyāmṛtam idaṃ yathoktaṃ parupāsate || 20 ||

Chapter 13

śrī arjuna uvāca
prakṛtiṃ puruṣaṃ caiva kṣetraṃ kṣetrajñam eva ca || 1 ||
idaṃ śarīraṃ kaunteya kṣetram ityabhidhīyate || 2 ||
kṣetrajñaṃ cāpi māṃ viddhi sarva kṣetreṣu bhārata || 3 ||
tat kṣetraṃ yacca yādṛk ca yad vikāri yataśca yat || 4 ||
ṛṣibhir bahudhā gītaṃ chandobhir vividhaiḥ pṛthak || 5 ||
mahābhūtānyahamkāro buddhir avyaktam eva ca || 6 ||
icchā dveṣaḥ sukhaṃ duḥkhaṃ saṅghātaścetanā dhṛtiḥ || 7 ||
amanitvam adambhitvam ahiṃsā kṣāntir ārjavam || 8 ||
indriyārtheṣu vairāgyam anahaṃkāra eva ca || 9 ||
asaktir anabhiṣvaṅgaḥ putra-dāra-gṛhādiṣu || 10 ||
mayi cānanya-yogena bhaktiravyabhicāriṇī || 11 ||
adhyātmajñāna nityatvaṃ tattvajñānārtha darśanam || 12 ||
jñeyaṃ yattat pravakṣyāmi yajjñātvāmṛtam aśnute || 13 ||
sarvataḥ pāṇipādaṃ tatsarvato' kṣiśiro-mukham || 14 ||
sarvendriya guṇābhāsaṃ sarvendriya vivarjitam || 15 ||
bahirantaśca bhūtānām acaraṃ carameva ca || 16 ||
avibhaktaṃ ca bhūteṣu vibhaktam iva ca sthitam || 17 ||

jyotiṣām api tajjyotis tamasaḥ paramucyate || 18 ||
iti kṣetraṃ tathā jñānaṃ jñeyaṃ coktaṃ samāsataḥ || 19 ||
prakṛtiṃ puruṣaṃ caiva viddyanādī ubhāvapi || 20 ||
kārya kāraṇa kartṛtve hetuḥ prakṛtir ucyate || 21 ||
puruṣaḥ prakṛtistho hi bhuṅkte prakṛtijān guṇān || 22 ||
upadṛṣṭānumantā ca bhartā bhoktā maheśvaraḥ || 23 ||
ya evaṃ vetti puruṣaṃ prakṛtiṃ ca guṇaiḥ saha || 24 ||
dhyānenātmani paśyanti kecid ātmānam ātmanā || 25 ||
anye tvevam ajānantaḥ śrutvānyebhya upāsate || 26 ||
yāvatsaṃjāyate kiṃcit sattvaṃ sthāvara jaṅgamam || 27 ||
samaṃ sarveṣu bhūteṣu tiṣṭhantaṃ parameśvaram || 28 ||
samaṃ paśyan hi sarvatra samavasthitam īśvaram || 29 ||
prakṛtyaiva ca karmāṇi kriyamāṇāni sarvaśaḥ || 30 ||
anāditvān nirguṇatvāt paramātmāyam avyayaḥ || 31 ||
yathā sarvagataṃ saukṣmyād-ākāśaṃ nopalipyate || 32 ||
yathā prakāśayatyekaḥ kṛtsnaṃ lokam imaṃ ravaḥ || 33 ||
kṣetra kṣetrajñayor-evam antaraṃ jñāna-cakṣuṣā || 34 ||

Chapter 14

paraṃ bhūyaḥ pravakṣyāmi jñānānāṃ jñānam uttamam || 1 ||
idaṃ jñānam upāśritya mama sadharmyam āgatāḥ || 2 ||
mama yonir mahadbrahma tasmin garbham dadhāmyaham || 3 ||
sarva yoniṣu kaunteya mūrtayaḥ sambhavanti yāḥ || 4 ||
sattvaṃ rajas tama iti guṇāḥ prakṛti saṃbhavāḥ || 5 ||
tatra sattvaṃ nirmalatvāt prakāśakam anāmayam || 6 ||
rajo rāgātmakaṃ viddhi tṛṣṇā saṅga samudbhavam || 7 ||
tamas tvajñānajaṃ viddhi mohanaṃ sarva dehinām || 8 ||
sattvaṃ sukhe sañjayati rajaḥ karmaṇi bhārata || 9 ||
rajas tamaścābhibhūya satvaṃ bhavati bhārata || 10 ||
sarva dvāreṣu dehe'smin prakāśa upajāyate || 11 ||
lobhaḥ pravṛttir āraṃbhaḥ karmaṇām aśamaḥ spṛhā || 12 ||
aprakāśo'pravṛttiśca pramādo moha eva ca || 13 ||
yadā sattve pravṛddhe tu pralayaṃ yāti deha-bhṛt || 14 ||
rajasi pralayaṃ gatvā karma saṅgiṣu jāyate || 15 ||
karmaṇaḥ sukṛtasyāhuḥ sātvikaṃ nirmalaṃ phalam || 16 ||
satvāt saṅjayate jñānaṃ rajaso lobha eva ca || 17 ||
ūrdhvaṃ gacchanti satvasthā madhye tiṣṭhanti rājasāḥ || 18 ||
nānyaṃ guṇebhyaḥ kartāraṃ yadā draṣṭānupaśyati || 19 ||
guṇān etān atītya trīn dehī deha samudbhavān || 20 ||
kair-liṅgais trīn guṇān etān atīto bhavati prabho || 21 ||
prakāśaṃ ca pravṛttiṃ ca mohameva ca pāṇḍava || 22 ||
udāsīnavad āsīno guṇair yo na vicālyate || 23 ||
sama duḥkha sukhaḥ svasthaḥ sama loṣṭāśma kāñcanaḥ || 24 ||
mānāpamānayos tulyas tulyo mitrāri pakṣayoḥ || 25 ||
māṃ ca yo'vyabhicāreṇa bhakti yogena sevate || 26 ||
brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhā'ham amṛtasyāvyayasya ca || 27 ||

Chapter 15

ūrdhva mūlam adhaḥ śākham aśvatthaṃ prāhur avyayam || 1 ||
adhaścordhvaṃ prasṛtās tasya śākhāḥ guṇapravṛddhā viṣaya pravālāḥ || 2 ||
na rūpam asyeha tathopalabhyate nānto na cādir na saṃpratiṣṭhā || 3 ||
tataḥ padaṃ tat parimārgitavyaṃ yasmin gatā na nivartanti bhūyaḥ || 4 ||
nirmāna mohā jita saṅga doṣā adhyātma nityā vinivṛtta kāmāḥ || 5 ||

na tad bhāsayate sūryo na śaśāṅko na pāvakaḥ | || 6 ||
mamaivāṃśo jīva-loke jīvabhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ || 7 ||
śarīraṃ yad avāpnoti yaccāpyutkrāmat-īśvaraḥ || 8 ||
śrotraṃ cakṣuḥ sparśanaṃ ca rasanaṃ ghrāṇam eva ca || 9 ||
utkrāmantaṃ sthitaṃ vāpi bhuñjānaṃ vā guṇān-vitam || 10 ||
yatanto yoginaścainaṃ paśyanty-ātmany-avasthitam || 11 ||
yadāditya gataṃ tejo jagad bhāsayate'khilam || 12 ||
gām āviśya ca bhūtāni dhārayāmy-aham ojasā || 13 ||
ahaṃ vaiśvānaro bhūtvā prāṇināṃ deham āśritaḥ || 14 ||
sarvasya cāhaṃ hṛdi sanniviṣṭo mattaḥ smṛtir jñānam apohanaṃ ca || 15 ||
dvāvimau puruṣau loke kṣarāścākṣara eva ca || 16 ||
uttamaḥ puruṣas-tvanyaḥ paramātmety-udāhṛtaḥ || 17 ||
yasmāt-kṣaram-atīto'ham akṣarādapi cottamaḥ || 18 ||
yo mām-evam asammūḍho jānāti puruṣottamam || 19 ||
iti guhyatamaṃ śāstram idam uktaṃ mayā'nagha || 20 ||

Chapter 16

abhayaṃ satva saṃśuddhiḥ jñāna yoga vyavasthitaḥ || 1 ||
ahiṃsā satyam akrodhas tyāgaḥ śāntir apaiśunam || 2 ||
tejaḥ kṣamā dhṛtiḥ śaucam adroho nātimānitā || 3 ||
dambho darpo'bhimānaśca krodhaḥ pāruṣyam eva ca || 4 ||
daivī sampad vimokṣāya nibandhāyāsurīm matā || 5 ||
dvau bhūta sargau loko'smin daiva āsura eva ca || 6 ||
pravṛttiṃ ca nivṛttiṃ ca janā na vidurāsurāḥ || 7 ||
asatyam apratiṣṭhaṃ te jagadāhur anīśvaram || 8 ||
etāṃ dṛṣṭim avaṣṭabhya naṣṭātmāno'lpa buddhayaḥ || 9 ||
kāmam āśritya duṣpūraṃ dambha māna madānvitāḥ || 10 ||
cintām aparimeyāṃ ca pralayāntām upāśritāḥ || 11 ||
āśāpāśa śatair baddhāḥ kāma krodha parāyaṇāḥ || 12 ||
idamadya mayā labdham imaṃ prāpsyase manoratham || 13 ||
asau mayā hataḥ śatrur haniṣye cāparān api || 14 ||
āṣyo'bhijanavān asmi ko'nyosti sadṛśo mayā || 15 ||
anekacitta vibhrāntāḥ moha-jāla-samāvṛtāḥ || 16 ||
ātma-saṃbhāvitāḥ stabdhā dhana-māna-madānvitāḥ || 17 ||
ahaṅkāraṃ balaṃ darpaṃ kāmaṃ krodhaṃ ca saṃśritāḥ || 18 ||
tān ahaṃ dviṣataḥ krūrān saṃsāreṣu narādhamān || 19 ||
āsurīṃ yonim āpannā mūḍhā janmani janmani || 20 ||
trividhaṃ naraksyedaṃ dvāraṃ nāśanam ātmanaḥ || 21 ||
etair vimuktaḥ kaunteya tamo dvārais tribhir naraḥ || 22 ||
yaḥ śāstra vidhim utsṛjya vartate kāma kārataḥ || 23 ||
tasmāt śāstra pramāṇaṃ te kārya akārya vyavasthitau || 24 ||

Chapter 17

ye śāstra vidhim utsṛjya yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ || 1 ||
trividhā bhavati śraddhā dehināṃ sā svabhāvajā || 2 ||
satvānurūpā sarvasya śraddhā bhavati bhārata || 3 ||
yajante sātvikā devān yakṣa rakṣāṃsi rājasāḥ || 4 ||
aśāstra vihitaṃ ghoraṃ tapyante ye tapo janāḥ || 5 ||
karṣayantaḥ śarīrasthaṃ bhūta-grāmam acetasaḥ || 6 ||
āhārastvapi sarvasya trividho bhavati priyaḥ || 7 ||
āyuḥ sattva bal-ārogya sukha prīti vivardhanāḥ ||| 8 ||
kaṭvamla lavaṇāty-uṣṇa tīkṣṇa rūkṣa vidāhinaḥ || 9 ||
yāta-yāmaṃ gatarasaṃ pūti paryuṣitaṃ ca yat || 10 ||

āphalākāṃkṣibhir yajño vidhi dṛṣṭo ya ijyate || 11 ||
abhisandhāya tu phalaṃ dambhārtham api caiva yat || 12 ||
vidhi hīnam asṛṣṭānnaṃ mantra-hīnam adakṣiṇam || 13 ||
deva dvija guru prājña pūjanaṃ śaucam ārjavam | || 14 ||
anudvega-karaṃ vākyaṃ satyaṃ priyahitaṃ ca yat || 15 ||
manaḥ prasādaḥ saumyatvaṃ maunam ātma vinigrahaḥ || 16 ||
śraddhayā parayā taptaṃ tapas tat trividhaṃ naraiḥ || 17 ||
satkāra māna pūjārthaṃ tapo dambhena caiva yat || 18 ||
mūḍha-grāheṇa ātmano yat pīḍayā kriyate tapaḥ || 19 ||
dātavyam iti yad-dānaṃ dīyate'anupakāriṇe || 20 ||
yattu pratyupakārārthaṃ phalam uddiśya vā punaḥ || 21 ||
adeśakāle yad-dānam apātrebhyaśca dīyate || 22 ||
oṃ tat sad iti nirdeśo brahmaṇas trividhaḥ smṛtaḥ || 23 ||
tasmād om-ity-udāhṛtya yajña dāna tapaḥ kriyāḥ || 24 ||
tad-ity-anabhisandhāya phalaṃ yajña-tapaḥ kriyāḥ || 25 ||
sad-bhāve sādhubhāve ca sad-ity-etat prayujyate || 26 ||
yajñe tapasi dāne ca sthitiḥ saditi cocyate || 27 ||
aśraddhayā hutaṃ dattaṃ tapas taptaṃ kṛtaṃ ca yat | || 28 ||

Chapter 18

saṃnyāsasya mahābāho tattvam icchāmi veditum || 1 ||
kāmyānāṃ karmaṇāṃ nyāsaṃ saṃnyāsaṃ kavayo viduḥ || 2 ||
tyājayaṃ doṣavad ityeke karma prāhur manīṣiṇaḥ || 3 ||
niścayaṃ śṛṇu me tatra tyāge bharata sattama || 4 ||
yajña dāna tapaḥ karma na tyājyaṃ kāryam eva tat || 5 ||
etānyapi tu karmāṇi saṅgaṃ tvyaktvā phalāni ca || 6 ||
niyatasya tu saṃnyāsaḥ karmaṇo nopapadyate || 7 ||
duḥkham ityeva yat karma kāya kleśa-bhayāt tyajet | || 8 ||
kāryam ityeva yat karma niyataṃ kriyate'rjuna || 9 ||
na dveṣṭy-akuśalaṃ karma kuśale nānuṣajjate || 10 ||
na hi deha-bhṛtā śakyaṃ tyaktuṃ karmāṇy-aśeṣataḥ || 11 ||
aniṣṭam iṣṭaṃ miśraṃ ca trividhaṃ karmaṇaḥ phalam || 12 ||
pañcaitāni mahābāho kāraṇāni nibodha me || 13 ||
adhiṣṭhānaṃ tathā kartā karaṇaṃ ca pṛthagvidham || 14 ||
śarīra vāṅgmanobhir yat karma prārabhate naraḥ || 15 ||
tatraivaṃ sati kartāram ātmānaṃ kevalaṃ tu yaḥ || 16 ||
yasya nāhaṃkṛto bhāvo buddhir yasya na lipyate || 17 ||
jñānaṃ jñeyaṃ pari-jñātā trividhā karma codanā || 18 ||
jñānaṃ karma ca kartā ca trividhaiva guṇabhedataḥ || 19 ||
sarva-bhūteṣu yenaikaṃ bhāvam avyayam īkṣate || 20 ||
pṛthaktvena ty yaj-jñānaṃ nānā bhāvān pṛthag-vidhān || 21 ||
yat tu kṛtsnavad ekasmin kārye saktam ahaitukam || 22 ||
niyataṃ saṅga rahitam arāga-dveṣataḥ kṛtam || 23 ||
yat tu kāmepsunā karma sāhaṅkāreṇa vā punaḥ || 24 ||
anubandhaṃ kṣayaṃ hiṃsām anavekṣya ca pauruṣam || 25 ||
mukta saṅgo'nahaṃvādī dhṛty-utsāha-samanvitaḥ || 26 ||
rāgī karma phala prepsur lubdho hiṃsātmako'śuciḥ || 27 ||
ayuktaḥ prākṛtaḥ stabdhaḥ śaṭho naiṣkṛtiko'lasaḥ || 28 ||
buddher bhedaṃ dhṛteścaiva guṇatas trividhaṃ śṛṇu || 29 ||
prkṛtiṃ ca nivṛttiṃ ca kāryākārye bhayābhaye || 30 ||
yayā dharmam adharmaṃ ca kāryaṃ cākāryam eva ca || 31 ||
adharmaṃ dharmam iti yā manyate tamasāvṛtā || 32 ||
dhṛtyā yayā dhārayate manaḥ prāṇendriya kriyāḥ || 33 ||
yayā tu dharma kāmārthān dhṛtyā dhārayate'rjuna || 34 ||

yayā svapnaṃ bhayaṃ śokaṃ viṣādaṃ madam eva ca || 35 ||
sukhaṃ tvidānīṃ trividhaṃ śṛṇu me bharatarṣabha || 36 ||
yat tad agre viṣam iva pariṇāme'mṛtopamam || 37 ||
viṣayendriya saṅyogād yat tad agre'mṛtopamam || 38 ||
yad agre cānudandhe ca sukhaṃ mohanam ātmanaḥ || 39 ||
na tad asti pṛthivyāṃ vā divi deveṣu vā punaḥ || 40 ||
brāhmaṇa kṣatriya viśāṃ śūdrāṇāṃ ca paraṅtapa || 41 ||
śamo damas tapaḥ śaucaṃ kṣāntir ārjavam eva ca || 42 ||
śauryaṃ tejo dhṛtir dākṣyaṃ yuddhe cāpyapalāyanam || 43 ||
kṛṣi gaurakṣya vāṇijyaṃ vaiśya-karma svabhāvajam || 44 ||
sve sve karmaṇyabhirataḥ saṃsiddhiṃ labhate naraḥ || 45 ||
yataḥ pravṛttir bhūtānāṃ yena sarvam idaṃ tatam || 46 ||
śreyān svadharmo viguṇaḥ para-dharmāt svanuṣṭhitāt || 47 ||
sahajaṃ karma kaunteya sadoṣam api na tyajet || 48 ||
asakta buddhiḥ sarvatra jitātmā vigata spṛhaḥ || 49 ||
siddhiṃ prāpto yathā brahma tathāpnoti nobodha me || 50 ||
buddhyā viśuddhayā yukto dhṛtyātmānaṃ niyamya ca || 51 ||
vivikta-sevī laghdāśī yata-vāk-kāya-mānasaḥ || 52 ||
ahaṅkāraṃ balaṃ darpaṃ kāmaṃ krodhaṃ parigraham || 53 ||
brahma-bhūtaḥ pasannātmā na śocati na kāṅkṣati || 54 ||
bhaktyā māmabhijānāti yāvān yaścāsmi tattvataḥ || 55 ||
sarva karmāṇyapi sadā kurvāṇo mad vyapāśrayaḥ || 56 ||
cetasā sarva karmāṇi mayi saṃnyasya mat paraḥ || 57 ||
mac-cittaḥ sarva durgāṇi mat-prasādāt tariṣyasi || 58 ||
yad ahaṅkāram āśritya na yotsya iti manyase || 59 ||
svabhāvajane kaunteya nibaddhaḥ svena karmaṇā || 60 ||
īśvaraḥ sarvabhūtānāṃ hṛddeśo'rjuna tiṣṭhati || 61 ||
tameva śaraṇaṃ gaccha sarva-bhāvena bhārata || 62 ||
iti te jñānam ākhyātaṃ guhyād guhyataraṃ mayā || 63 ||
sarva guhyatamaṃ bhūyaḥ śṛṇu me paramaṃ vacaḥ || 64 ||
manmanā bhava mad bhakto mad yājī māṃ namas kuru || 65 ||
sarva dharmān parityajya mām ekaṃ śaraṇaṃ vraja || 66 ||
idaṃ te nātapaskāya nābhaktāya kadācana || 67 ||
ya imaṃ paraṃ guhyaṃ mad bhakteṣv-abhidhāsyati || 68 ||
na ca tasmān manuṣyeṣu kaścin me priya kṛttamaḥ || 69 ||
adhyeṣyete ca ya imaṃ dharmyaṃ saṃvādam āvayoḥ 70 ||
śraddhāvān anasūyaśca śṛṇuyād api yo naraḥ || 71 ||
kaccid etacchrutaṃ pārtha tvyaikāgreṇa cetasā || 72 ||
naṣṭo mohaḥ smṛtir labdhā tvat prasādān mayācyuta || 73 ||
ityahaṃ vāsudevasya pārthasya ca mahātmanaḥ || 74 ||
vyāsa prasādācchrutvān etad guhyam aham param || 75 ||
rājan saṃsmṛtya saṃsmṛtya saṃvādam imam adbhutam || 76 ||
tacca saṃsmṛtya saṃsmṛtya rūpam atyadbhutaṃ hareḥ || 77 ||
yatra yogeśvaraḥ kṛṣṇo yatra pārtho dhanurdharaḥ || 78 ||